

Zero Waste in the Parks

Adopted by Missoula Parks and Recreation Board – February 2017

Zero Waste Policy

The City of Missoula has adopted the concept of Zero Waste defined by the Zero Waste International Alliance as a guiding principle for all municipal operations and programs. This concept reads as follows:

“Zero Waste is a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient, and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use.”

Missoula Parks and Recreation serves thousands of visitors each year in numerous facilities, sites, lands and programs. Thus, the Department is uniquely positioned to educate, encourage, and at times, require compliance with best practices for reducing, eliminating, or even preventing waste.

See exhibits for background information and current practices. (Attached)

Locations

The Department will prioritize Caras Park, Fort Missoula Regional Park and McCormick Park as new, or additional, key locations for Zero Waste efforts. Existing sites such as Currents Aquatic Center, Splash Montana, and the City's open space conservation lands continue to be, or work toward, Zero Waste via existing programs and policies. As success is achieved, the Department will add sites and develop plans to phase in the rest of Parks and Recreation system over time.

Events/Programs

A three tiered system based on event size and/or type of permit* requested will determine the Zero Waste requirements.

*Park shelters will remain pack it in, pack it out, whenever possible and effective.

- 0-100 (all events)
 - Provide an on-line brochure and checklist which walks event organizers through zero waste activities before, during and after the event.
 - Provide site plan/map of zero waste facilities as helpful and appropriate
 - Provide verbal orientation to event coordinator,
 - Provide any additional education and resource materials to enhance recycling/reuse and support SITES certification
- >100 (special use permits, events, fun runs, etc.)
 - Same provisions as note above, plus...
 - Establish an excess waste/trash can disposal fee for permitted events
 - Require provision of recycling containers and/or include as part of reservation services (add to fee schedule)
 - Work with event hosts/ coordinators to create a site and event specific Zero Waste Plan and implement. Provide measure/metrics when possible.
- Ban use of certain kinds of materials for catered events in parks – e.g., non-reusable/non-recyclable plastic cups, Styrofoam cups, other items that are long-lived/toxic in the waste stream. Use of banned items may include loss of deposit for

failure to substantially comport. Single use glass beverage containers are already banned by ordinance.

Event Options

- (Require or offer) a third party pickup familiar with park facility service
 - Provide 3rd party lists to customers
- Provide Option of Using specific volunteer groups to help with recycling efforts.
 - Work with nonprofit organizations and students to help event organizers obtain volunteers on a regular basis
 - Volunteers at events can assist in educating the public about where to discard different materials/products at venues and special events.(Zero Waste ambassador concept)
 - Youth fundraising opportunities (for example youth softball team assists in recycling and earns money for services)
- Provide messaging to a broad audience. Example: Post zero waste education signage on back of bathroom stalls and throughout facilities

Upstream (prevention the creation of waste) Event Options

Encourage, through incentives, preventing the creation of waste, thereby reducing not only waste but the efforts to reduce and manage waste.

Reusable Containers/Flatware & Dishware

- **Option A:** Require/Incentivize use of durable/reusable serving-ware and provide dishwashing service for the serving-ware. If food services are in one central location, deposits can be charged for durables to be returned at the dishwashing station.
 - Educate and encourage caterers
 - Create a fund for buying down vendor rates and/or offer incentives for this action
- **Option B:** Require vendors to use and distribute only compostable dining ware and utensils or those materials made from recycled content.
 - Require/incentivize vendors to sell refillable beverage containers as an alternative to disposable containers.
 - Incentive through the Request for Proposals programs by requiring or scoring best practices toward Zero Waste measures.

Plastic Beverage Containers

- **Option A:** Ban, or at least incentivize reduction of, single use plastic beverage containers
 - **Use/encourage** branded reusable beverage containers for sale at concessions
 - Encourage the use of water beverage container filling stations
 - Encourage the use of side line water/beverage jugs (5 gallon Gatorade type)
 - Provide Water Trailer where appropriate
- **Option B:** Offer discount/incentive for events that do not use plastic beverage containers
 - Due to staff and enforcement limitations, apply a disincentive fee.

Excess Food

- Develop a contract with the Food Bank, or other similar non-profits, to have meals and extra food picked up at the end of the event

Bins (Recycle containers)

- Use a simple two can system – Recyclable Plastic Beverage container & Cans and Landfill
 - Not applicable to “mutt-mitt” stations as these are often remote and encourage dumping of unauthorized waste. Also, remote cans lead to higher levels of contamination making recycling unrealistic.
- Keep permanent bins color-coordinated (and sized if possible) so they are consistent throughout the City and Parks – this will cost to convert entire system, but will also enhance messaging and recycling. Recommendations:
 - Sloped can design to discourage things left on top
 - Overarching Zero Waste branding and messaging
 - Individualize with individual park logo (could extend to downtown, BID, etc.)
- Apply for grants to supplement costs
- Utilize recyclable recycling bins where/when appropriate (For example: pop up cardboard bins)
- Purchase extra recycling bins/zero waste stations for customers/events if normal facility bins are not enough to accommodate party size for rental.

Signage

Use correct terminology where it applies: Zero Waste Vs. Recycling

- Use prominent and comprehensive signage above bins with graphics and narrative to reduce confusion
- Use consistent look, language and graphics/images (standardized plaques)

Design for the Future and Future Phases

- Replace current public space trash cans with Zero Waste stations.
- Compost and Glass should be phased-in as the systems become available.
- Continue efforts to increase recycling, with emphasis on reducing, or preferably eliminating the creation, of waste.
- Design all new parks and major renovations to accommodate for zero waste policy

Maintenance and Measures

- Develop policy and seek solutions for common maintenance considerations
 - Contamination
 - Materials that don't easily fit in can. Example: Cardboard
- Understand benefits and costs
 - Audit (Waste characterization)
 - Ongoing measurement and metrics
- Educate and train staff – Safety of employees remains the priority at all times.

Exhibit A -Zero Waste in the Parks

Background

According to the DEQ's *State of Montana 2014 Recycling and Waste Diversion Summary*, Montanans generate an average of 8.8 pounds of waste per day. This is double the national average of 4.4 pounds generated per person daily. In order to reduce the amount of waste contributed by the City of Missoula, its departments, and the Community of Missoula, there has been an increase in plans and policies aimed to reduce waste and reduce their carbon footprint.

On February 8th, 2016, City Council adopted the *Missoula Zero Waste Resolution* to directly decrease the amount of waste generated by municipal operations and to lead the Missoula Community by example.

The Zero Waste Resolution states the Missoula City Council supports the creation of a zero waste plan for the City of Missoula. The plan should set reduction goals for the City of Missoula "the organization" and the City of Missoula "the community and geographic area".

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Under the Missoula's Zero Waste Resolution, the Missoula City Council directs staff/employees to facilitate the development of a Zero Waste Plan to be completed two years from the date of adoption (February 8th, 2018).

The Zero Waste Plan will be designed to achieve the goal of waste diversion for the City of Missoula to 90% by the year 2050, with interim goals of 30% or better by 2025, 40% or better by 2030, and 60% or better by 2040.

In addition, in 2013 the City of Missoula developed and adopted the Missoula Conservation & Climate Action Plan (MCCAP). This plan was the culmination of a long history of energy conservation and climate action. It serves as a road map to maintain progress in the City's commitment to reduce energy and fuel consumption, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, practice fiscal responsibility, and act as responsible stewards of natural resources, the environment, the economy, the quality of life, and the community.

The MCCAP states that all city facilities will implement and manage internal policies and practices aimed to reduce their waste stream. The first of these policies and procedures was implemented by the City of Missoula's Energy Conservation staff in conjunction with Facilities and Fleet staff, with the development of an "all in one" test pilot recycling program implemented in three buildings (City Hall, City Council Chambers/MRA, and Currents).

Further, on November 23, 2015 the Missoula City Council adopted the draft Missoula City Growth Policy. This is a broad body of public policy aimed to address the key components of community development including natural resources and the environment, housing, land use, economic development, transportation, public infrastructure and services, and local services.

The growth policy incorporates programs and projects that address sustainability and climate change including the recycling and reuse of materials to achieve zero waste. In *Our Missoula*,

community outreach with schools, businesses, nonprofits, and residents is recommended to increase awareness, explain benefits, and promote voluntary efforts to address climate change and a carbon neutral lifestyle.

The City of Missoula also supports the Zero Waste Focus area developed by Climate Smart Missoula. This focus area contains a list of strategies that encourage local entities already committed to sustainability to prioritize community-wide waste reduction in their strategic objective. Furthermore, the focus area engages the Missoula business community in recognizing opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship as Missoula moves toward Zero Waste.

Finally, the Missoula Downtown Association has partnered with the City of Missoula and Climate Smart Missoula to reduce waste at the annual River City Roots Festival. The strategies used include eliminating straws, using commemorative “Roots Fest” cups intended to be used and reused instead of disposable plastic cups, along with offering access to Republic Services All-In-One Recycling service throughout the festival. The organizers of the Roots Festival also partnered with the Missoula Food Bank for food recovery and redistribution to reduce food waste.

The Missoula Downtown Association has received 20 recycling bins through the Dr. Pepper/Snapple group. These bins are temporary use bins for events hosted at Caras Park to improve recycling efforts.

Current Situation

Presently there is not a formal waste policy at the Missoula Parks and Recreation (MP&R) department. Often park employees and users set aluminum cans next to garbage cans to deter community members from pulling trash out of the recycling receptacles and leaving it on the ground when looking for recyclable cans.

MP&R does recycle cardboard and combined materials in their facilities yard, aquatic facilities, and offices. The department also participates in Republic Services all-in-one recycling program at the currents and administrative offices. Throughout the city-wide park system, all other waste is collected from garbage cans throughout facilities and offices by Park Operations staff daily during the summer months and twice weekly during off-season. This waste is then collected by Republic Services and taken to the local landfill. Park Operations also implements a “Take-one, Leave-one” plastic grocery bag re-use program to reduce the need to purchase and resupply Mutt Mitts® for dog waste clean-up.

In addition Missoula Parks and Rec diverts tree trimming and woody material from the landfill by chipping and sending to composting facility or reusing chips for mulch in landscape beds. A portion of large woody debris is diverted and repurposed for City uses or for use by Hot Woods, Inc.

Aquatic Facilities use bulk containers and refillable or recyclable containers as available.

Design Standards for park and recreation facility restrooms seeks eliminate use of paper towels for hand drying by specifying electric hand driers be supplied in plumbed restrooms.

There are two concurrent situations that focus the need to formalize Zero Waste policies and practices to create consistency and alignment with the plans and goals listed above in Background: the review and revision of the vendor contract for Caras Park and the development and opening of Fort Missoula Regional Park.

The Parks and Recreation Board is interested in revising vendor contracts to include increased recycling.

With the combined opening of the Fort Missoula Regional Park (FMRP) and the zero waste efforts the City of Missoula is performing, our community has a unique opportunity to employ strategies to reduce landfill waste. Doing so will help FMRP become SITES certified. SITES is a framework that incorporates landscape architects, engineers, and other planners to design facilities that protect ecosystems and enhance the benefits they provide to communities.

SITES is a point based system in which the number of points a project earns determines the certification level it receives. This is similar to LEED certification and allows projects to be benchmarked against performance criteria. Points can be earned through waste reduction strategies by reusing salvaged materials. This can be done during normal operation, during demolition of previous facilities, and during construction of the new facility. More points can be earned if the facility provides economic and social benefits to the local community during site construction by providing employment opportunities and purchasing of local materials and services. Finally, points can also be earned through education and the promotion of understanding sustainability in ways that positively influences user behavior by interpreting on-site features and processes.

Implementing a new waste reduction policy for the parks prior to January 2017 will allow for coordinated strategies to occur throughout the city of Missoula. It will also allow for new policies to be implemented before 2017's special permits are distributed and lease agreements are signed.