

## RECYCLING: SUCCESSFUL, JOB-PROMOTING, AND COST-EFFECTIVE

### Recycling Is Good for the City's Economy

- Steam sales don't cover the costs of collecting and burning waste. Sales revenues, similarly, don't cover the entire costs of collecting, sorting and recycling waste, but the revenues can and do help to offset costs. A study of 158 cities found that net costs for recycling were 35% lower than for landfilling. (David Folz, "Municipal Recycling Performance," *Pub. Admin. Rev.* July/Aug. 1999)
- More importantly, recycling creates new economic opportunities. Sending money out of the City, instead of investing it in recycling options that foster economic development here, makes no sense.
- Markets are strong for waste paper (1/3 of the City's waste). One reason is the Visy paper plant on Staten Island, which uses City garbage to create 115 jobs and a marketable recycled paper product.

### The City Should Expand Recycling and Improve Collection Efficiency for More Savings

- Make recycling easy for people moving around NYC. All public places (parks, subways, etc.) should have bins for recyclable materials with educational messages about recycling.
- Promote markets: (1) Increase City purchasing of recycled content products; and (2) direct the City economic assistance programs to help establish recycling businesses -- the Visy plant was a great economic development success. Focus on small businesses for metal, glass and plastics.
- Target neighborhoods for education and analysis when they have achieved lower levels of recycling than neighborhoods with a similar population density. Target educational programs to reduce contamination in the recycling waste stream as needed to improve marketability.
- Improve collection efficiency -- for example, by expanding containerized collection. The 1992 *Solid Waste Management Plan* found that containerized collection costs half as much as curbside collection, yet only 50 of Manhattan's 900 institutional sites have such collection.
- Obtain full recycling compliance from agencies and authorities. Recently, the Organization of Waterfront Neighborhoods (OWN), witnessed truckloads of recyclable cardboard and reusable furniture coming from the NYC Housing Authority when touring municipal transfer stations.

### Recycling Facilities Are Easier to Site but the City Has Failed to Invest in Them

- Even the *Life After Fresh Kills* report, which acknowledges public opposition to incinerators, admits that siting the Visy paper recycling mill "was not controversial" in part because it "does not produce unpleasant odors or visible pollution," and has little truck traffic. (p. A-28)
- Fresh Kills has been so cheap that the City has neglected to invest in recycling infrastructure -- material sorting facilities for metal, glass and plastic and composting facilities. Westchester County made these investments and has realized more favorable costs for recycling processing.

### Recycling Is Politically Essential

- Slashing the recycling budget puts the City in a bad political position in Congress, but a strong recycling program is an effective argument against legislation to restrict interstate export of waste.