Commercial Recycling Plan for the City of Fayetteville, Arkansas
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The Problem
The city of Fayetteville specifically has set a goal of 25% of waste diversion by 2015. This includes yard waste for composting, as well as other recyclable materials including but not limited to cardboard, glass, steel, aluminum, paper, and plastics one and two. Businesses and corporations are often responsible for large portions of waste, and this holds true here in Fayetteville. While the existing options are helpful, only about 190 of roughly 3,000 of Fayetteville’s businesses participate in the small business recycling program. What incentives could be given to encourage participation? Are there programs that work elsewhere that would also work well here?

The Facts
• The city sent 50,786 tons of solid waste collected from residential and commercial services, the dropbox, (roll off container program), and transfer stations to the landfill in 2010. This accounted for 85% of the total waste stream collected and processed at the City’s Material Recovery Facility (MRF) and Transfer Station. Of the remaining 15% of materials, 9% were recycled and 6% were composted (City of Fayetteville, pg. 7).
• Including avoided landfill fees, the city of Fayetteville receives $125.04 per ton of recycling material sold” (City of Fayetteville, pg. 20).
• Before publishing the Recycling Resource Management Plan, a survey was conducted. In this study, only 7% of businesses said they did not participate in recycling programs because one was not available, although many noted not having enough storage spaces for the different containers.
• The commercial recycling program that currently exists here in Fayetteville is actually subsidized by the residential services fee.

The Project
The purpose of this project is to examine current corporate and business waste and recycling policies in various cities across the United States. After this evaluation, as well as examining the demographics of and the resources available to this area, the goal is to produce a feasible commercial recycling program plan for the city of Fayetteville, Arkansas. Along with a more in-depth program, I hope to come up with a more sociology-based outreach and advertisement system for the recycling programs in an attempt to maximize participation from community members.

Proposals
• Instead of one cart and up to 5 recycling bins for the small business program, an initial implementation of 2 carts: one for recycling and one for landfill waste, with the option of keeping a third cart for glass. This would reduce the amount of space taken up by the bins, while increasing the ease of the program.
• Mandatory recycling for businesses that produce 4 or more cubic yards of waste and housing complexes of 5 or more. This has been implemented statewide in California, and seems to be doing well.
• Food waste composting. Use this at restaurants first, and when the funding to increase the capacity of the program becomes available expand the food waste composting to residential areas as well.
• It may not be necessary to encounter and persuade everyone to participate, but rather convince a few people in each neighborhood, and the effect could trickle down. According to a substantial amount of research conducted by Nicholas Christakis, a professor at Harvard, and James Fowler, a professor at the University of California, San Diego, ‘‘everything we do or say tends to ripple through our network, having an impact on our friends (one degree), our friends’ friends (two degrees), and even our friends’ friends’ friends (three degrees). The rule applies to a broad range of attitudes, feelings, and behaviors and it applies to the spread of phenomena as diverse as political views, weight gain, and happiness’’ (Connected, pg. 28).

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