



Domestic Processing of Mixed Plastics: Stakeholder Meeting Summary

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**Seattle
Public
Utilities**



Logistics

- Hosted by **Seattle Public Utilities** and **King County's LinkUp Program on January 30**
- Invitation only, attended by 60+ people from Washington, Oregon, California, British Columbia
 - MRF operators
 - Plastics processors
 - Local and State governments
 - Economic development and funding organizations

Agenda

Time	Topic
1:00 – 1:25pm	Welcome, Opening Remarks
1:25 – 1:40pm	Context: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The current landscape in Washington State• The Importance of Domestic Processing to citizens and NGOs
1:40– 2:20pm	Material Recovery Facilities Panel
2:20 – 3:00pm	Perspectives on Additional Sorting/Processing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Merlin Plastics• Denton Plastics• Titus MRF Services
3:00 – 3:20pm	Development Assistance for Altering or Building Domestic Infrastructure
3:20 – 3:30pm	Short Break
3:30 – 4:10pm	Small Group Breakout
4:10 – 4:50pm	Reconvene for Full Group Discussion
5:00	Adjourn

Findings: Domestic Processing Capacity Exists

There is current domestic processing capacity for mixed plastics load at Merlin in Vancouver BC.

- Cost to transport to Merlin facility from Seattle
- Cost to sort
- Revenue for materials – depending on contents of bales
 - HDPE Natural and Color
 - PP color
 - PET Clear
 - PET green
 - Polycoated fiber

Next Steps: Domestic Processing

- Determine feasibility of sending mixed plastics to Merlin
 - Understand costs for each community
 - Short term vs long term
- Explore funding sources
- Determine if there is political will
 - Task Force forming in King County

Findings: Interest in Building a Secondary MRF in PNW

Secondary MRF shifts from scrap commodity service to sorting service business model

- Primary MRFs in WA and OR send low volume materials and yield losses to Secondary MRF
 - Aggregates materials from MRFs to achieve critical mass
 - Sort materials into direct-to-mill commodities in truckload quantities
- Aggregated volumes justify investments in automated sorting technologies
- Opens additional domestic markets for materials such as PP, PS/EPS, and PLA

Findings: Interest in Building a Secondary MRF in PNW

- Improves Blue Bin Accountability
 - No need to export mixed loads of materials
 - Commodities sold direct-to-mill are documented
- Requires infrastructure investments in only one facility within a region
 - Allows the facility to quickly adapt to changes in packaging materials
- Manufacturer accountability
 - Manufacturers or brand owners are identified and contacted to see if they want to pay to have their packaging materials recycled

Next Steps: Secondary MRF

- Develop detailed costs and funding scenarios
 - Explore manufacturer funding
- Secure funding and commitment for material volumes
 - Co-op Model
 - General Partner(s) - provide capital investments
 - Limited Partner - primary MRFs provide unsorted materials and pay processing fee. In return receive portion of revenue from sale of materials.
- Facility could be operational within 9 – 12 months of securing material flow, funding and permits

Findings: Demand is Key

Step up the demand for recycled products and use recyclable materials in products and packaging.

- Recycling isn't recycling until recyclable materials are used to replace virgin feedstocks.
- Local and state governments must require the use of recycled content in products and packaging.
- Manufacturers must use recycled feedstocks in their products and packaging.

Next Steps: Create Demand

- Draft state legislation
 - Require manufacturers to use recycled feedstocks in their products and packaging
 - Coordinate with other states - California SB 168 requires recycled content in all beverage containers sold in the state
 - 2018 HB 2914 – work on new bill for 2019
- Develop local procurement ordinances
 - Require the use of recycled content in products and packaging
- Support national efforts - APR's Recycling Demand Champions
 - WM, Republic, Recology, Waste Connections, Amazon, Costco, etc.



Report Available at
King County LinkUp Webpage

<https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/dnpr/solid-waste/programs/linkup/documents.aspx>



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