

# THE REUSE CENTER

**A Recovery, Reuse, and Resale  
Program Promoting Zero Waste**



*Providing an environmentally secure and sustainable future*

## **Town of New Paltz Recycling Center**

The mission of the Town of New Paltz Recycling Center is to reduce waste initially through waste reduction at the source, and then secondarily, by connecting individuals who are discarding goods with others who are seeking to acquire those goods. Whether discarding or acquiring an item, the idea is to create a sustainable standard of living, while keeping usable materials out of the waste stream.

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## **Statement of Purpose**

A reputation for good customer service at the New Paltz Municipal Recycling Drop-Off Center (MRDC) is critical and has been established, while providing a variety of disposal options and maintaining a growing customer base of over 900 permit holders and 400 one-time users. The goal is to reduce waste through an intense waste diversion process, which will entail collecting reusable household and construction materials from the waste stream. Pre-disposal diversion will be achieved through outreach and education and by connecting individuals who are discarding goods with others wanting to acquire them. Whether discarding or acquiring an item, the idea is to create a sustainable standard of living, while keeping usable materials out of the waste stream.

New Paltz will implement a Reuse/Resale and a "Freecycle" networking program using social media and an onsite Reuse Center. Promotion of the Freecycle Network and Reuse Center at community events, online links, and eventually, in a quarterly newsletter that will build a grassroots foundation for public outreach and marketing to optimize distribution of waste reduction information.

The site for the Reuse Center has been upgraded to entice new users with extended hours of operations, including Memorial Day, as a means to manage the end of Spring Clean Up discards, as well as the annual multi-town yard sale. This material also provides one of the largest resources for the Reuse Center.

Future agreements to expand services to other municipalities are currently being negotiated. This will assist municipalities considering an option of no longer offering solid waste disposal services after the 20-year Intermunicipal Agreements expire with the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA) and establish a Regional Recycling Center. The plan is to implement an operation strategy to become fully self-sufficient by December 31, 2013.

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# I. The Program

## A. Brief Overview

Historically, the municipalities in Ulster County were individually responsible for managing solid waste. Each community developed its own strategy, which generally meant constructing a landfill. In the mid-1980's, after new initiatives to close non-complying existing landfills were undertaken by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), and strict requirements for the siting, construction, and operation of new disposal facilities were enacted, many communities found it beyond their financial and managerial capabilities to continue to dispose of solid waste in traditional ways. The Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA, the "Agency") was created by New York State legislation pursuant to Chapter 936 of the Laws of 1986, in response to a statewide municipal request for assistance in complying with stricter NYS DEC regulations. Establishing the Agency offset the financial hardship of each Ulster County municipality individually developing and implementing a Solid Waste Management Plan. The countywide plan was prepared by the Agency and approved by the Ulster County Legislature in September 1990. Part of the county plan included an agreement with the Town of New Paltz to take over the landfill operations as one of its three countywide consolidated landfills, close and monitor the landfill at the end of the DEC consent order in 1995, and provide funding to the town to upgrade its Municipal Recycling Drop-Off Center (MRDC) for residential use.

Ulster County's solid waste management systems are supported by revenues collected from use of the county transfer station, both municipal and commercial, and marketing of recyclable material. This system included Intermunicipal Agreements (IMAs) with each town operating a MRDC to provide collection containers for MSW for delivery to the transfer station, and for collection of mandated recyclables, which were collected at the county's Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). These revenues are used to support agency operations (UCRRA administration, MRF and transfer station staff, long-haul drivers, private contractors, including solid waste disposal, recycling, household hazardous waste collection, educational programs, fund capital projects, and repayment of the Net Service Fee).

The town complies with the local Ulster County Solid Waste Management Plan by maximizing waste reduction, reuse, and recycling in an effort to attain not only the state's recycling goals as set forth in the 1988 Solid Waste Management Act, but also the county's recycling goals as set forth in the county's plan. The town ensures that recyclable, hazardous, and other regulated materials are not disposed of in a landfill or incinerator, but recycled or appropriately disposed of, and the town reports to the NYS DEC and Ulster County RRA on its annual program accomplishments as required in the local law and county plan. The town continues to create, develop, and manage ongoing projects toward a Zero Waste goal, and strives to maximize recycling and diversion programs in accordance with New York State's list of priorities to Reduce, Reuse, Separate, and Recycle, 1989<sup>1</sup>.

Between 2007 and 2010 extensive site development, including a new office/education space, has been completed, along with trails leading to demonstration areas.

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<sup>1</sup> NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation, Reduce, Reuse, Separate and Recycle, 11/89

All Intermunicipal Agreements between the UCRRA and towns for MRDC collection services will begin to expire in 2012. Initial outreach to municipalities surrounding New Paltz has generated interest in combining MRDC services including residential material drop-off and brush/yard waste collection due to funding issues, and potential interest in removing themselves from the solid waste business. (see Attachment 5) The Town of New Paltz has initiated diversion programs that focus on construction and demolitions debris, clean wood and yard waste, and resalable items - Recovery, Reuse and Resale Program to divert reusable and resalable materials. The purpose is to decrease the need for expensive landfill space and transportation costs, as well as promoting Zero Waste initiatives.

## **B. Description of Program**

The goal is waste reduction initially, and then by educating the public, businesses, and institutions, to reduce waste at the source. Pre-disposal diversion will be achieved through outreach and education and by connecting individuals who are discarding goods with others who are seeking to acquire them. Whether discarding or acquiring an item, the idea is creating a sustainable standard of living, while keeping usable materials out of the waste stream. Through on site education and publications, techniques will be demonstrated on how to organization homes, businesses, and institutions on initial source separation (separating at the source). Waste diversion will be promoted for creating sustainable lifestyles.

The site has been upgraded to entice new users with extended hours of operations to include Memorial Day as a means to manage the end of Spring Clean Up and a multi-town yard sale (see Attachment 2). This material also provides one of the largest resources for the Reuse Center and the greatest opportunity for waste diversion. Locations and space requirements have already been designated for specific operations. Waste is brought into the MRDC in New Paltz, recycling is accepted for further processing, and an area for the Reuse Center program has been established. Materials that are suitable for diversion to the Reuse Center program will be identified upon acceptance at the town facility and removed. Major milestones in operations will be retrieving materials from the waste stream, thereby maximizing diversion and recycling, the final disposition of all items with the cooperation of MRDC users, and clearly marked, designated areas.

The upgrades, including a new office building/education area, will allow the opportunity to have public presentations and workshops to introduce the Reuse-A Center to additional users, and offer waste reduction ideas (i.e. kits compiled of diverted material to make crafts). It will provide patterns/kits for reuse and re-crafting, templates for creative, sustainable landscaping, and information on "greening" your home. The Freecycle networking program will be initiated and the Reuse Center store will be open during regular operating hours.

New Paltz will publicize Reuse/Resale and a "Freecycle" networking program using social media and signage for the onsite Reuse Center store. In order to optimize distribution of waste reduction information, promotion will take place at or on forums such as the Freecycle network, Reuse Center at community events, online links, and eventually in a quarterly newsletter to build a grassroots foundation for public outreach and education. Future agreements to expand services to other municipalities will be negotiated to assist towns considering no longer offering solid waste services after the 20-year Intermunicipal Agreements expire with the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA). (see

Attachment 5) This will be considered after reviewing the 2011 Profit and Loss Statement to ensure that the town is not subsidizing recycling center operations. The plan is to implement an operation strategy to become fully self-sufficient by December 31, 2013.

To implement the program, material will be collected, stored, inventoried, and staged for resale. Several options were researched including trailers, multiple sheds on concrete pads, or a single storage building. It is recommended that the most economic option is to build a permanent structure sometime in the future.

For administration of the program, an inventory system will need to be developed. Basic office equipment is needed, such as a computer, possible specialized software, color printer, facsimile machine, and general office supplies. A digital camera will be needed for inventory identification and advertising purposes. Onsite advertising with signage will be the initial sales tactic, but near-future branding and marketing will include Craig's list, local advertising, and displays at appropriate events (see Attachment 3).

For materials handling, other equipment needs will be shelving for displays, hand truck, and from time to time, a forklift to move merchandise and the use of the UCRRA scale.

### **C. Location of Program**

The property where the program will be implemented is located at 3 Clearwater Road, New Paltz, New York in the Town of New Paltz, County of Ulster, 12561, off a well-traveled intersection on State Route 32.

The area has several active commercial and public properties, including ball fields, a BMX track, Town Highway Department, and a UCRRA countywide transfer station.

### **D. Description of Property**

The existing MRDC is off of the footprint of the original landfill located on Clearwater Road in the Town of New Paltz. It is approximately five acres of commercially zoned property with two buildings. One building has a well-established equipment storage area and the other a newly built office space and education area.

## **II. Marketing**

### **A. Marketing Analysis**

The Town of New Paltz has been operating a municipal solid waste (MSW) and recycling facility for approximately 40 years, originally known as the "town dump." It is a half mile from a busy state road running through the Town of New Paltz, at an intersection without a traffic light. Although it is not highly visible to passer-bys, it is centrally located for residents and other businesses, and is in close proximity to other highly used town parcels. New signage with directional arrows has been conspicuously posted to draw in users (see Attachment 6).

Permitted and one-time users, SUNY students, and contractors will be interested in reasonably priced items that can be purchased quickly. Given the poor economy and Ulster County's continued loss of workforce and foreclosure crisis, the convenient location and prices will definitely be the success of this business. And, Ulster County has a large population of committed "green" purchasers seeking low-priced building materials and bargain hunters looking for unique treasures.

To date, students from as far away as Bard College, in Dutchess County, and a private performing arts school in Westchester have visited the site for materials to complete art projects or pick up materials for stage props. Do-It-Yourselfers have driven in from Orange County for building and home improvement materials. Current participation is from four counties.

## **B. Marketing Strategy/Plan**

Pre-disposal waste diversion education will be implemented to promote use of rescued materials and before expanding the Reuse Center. Extensive outreach and education is critical to the success of this program. Locally, there is a network of environmental groups, including SUNY New Paltz Recycling Club, New Paltz GreenWorks, and county chamber groups to help with the outreach by disseminating literature and, in turn, providing feedback on how the waste diversion program is operating.

It is envisioned that monthly workshops will be held to educate the public on creating gifts with the reusable materials, home decorating ideas, and using deconstructed home improvement materials. Creating kits with patterns and materials will enable novice customers to participate. Large bins with loose material will attract more seasoned artists, with visual creations on display as a method of sales promotion. Deconstruction (reverse hand demolition of buildings) will be taught as well to reduce the disposal of materials into landfills and provide materials for renovation and other small-scale construction projects.

Basing business on continued customer service and quality material at low prices will require a written operation manual for standardized, consistent, end results that will ensure the continuing patronage of users. Periodic specials will be added to stock, depending on seasonal fluctuations in types of materials received to entice new customers or keep regular customers from becoming uninterested, such as gift certificates for "The Gift That Keeps on Re-Giving." Quarterly design schematics will be created to keep resale areas visually appealing and as a means of rotating stock. Items that are not being purchased will be reduced in price until they are sold or moved to the "Freecycle" network. Eventually the item(s) (if suitable) will be palletted, wrapped, and donated to an authorized charity. Sales will be analyzed for effectiveness of current visual design and stock through receipts and customer surveys. Again, consistency in service and selection of materials will build the customer base.

The site will be continuously monitored to make it aesthetically more appealing and, if needed, upgraded. The drop-off areas have been designated with new signage, pavilions will be built to shelter potential buyers from the elements while looking through materials, and "yardscaping" will be used improve the entry area curb appeal. (NOTE: On site "yardscaping" is a promotion for urban sustainable living and for sharing/reusing plants and/or reusables for landscaping) As the site is developed, materials can be further



separated to maximize waste reduction with the intent of creating a template for Zero Waste.

A logo and color scheme will be developed for visual recognition, and a network of volunteers will be utilized to disseminate information through annual and special events, chamber groups, social media, schools, and businesses.

As business increases, staff responsibilities will become more specialized and less broad. The storage shed, currently located between the office and first trail, will be used to hold smaller diverted items and will be moved for better public access. Future plans to add new items or programs, services, and/or special events, will be undertaken. Each new venture will be added on a trial basis, and public input will determine whether it should continue.

### **C. Competition**

There is no known competition in Ulster County or surrounding counties, with the exception of “freecycle stations” at some local MRDCs (i.e. Rosendale and Marbletown). Most resale stores are classified with thrift and clothing sales such as the Salvation Army or Good Will. There is a successful construction and home improvement Re-Store store operated by Habitat for Humanities in Onondaga County that takes in reusable building materials and is operated by volunteers.

## **III. Management and Personnel**

### **A. Operating Procedures**

See Attachment 8.

### **B. Management Team**

Town Board: Authorizes and formalizes policies by resolution, approves capital purchases and contracts, and sets yearly fees.

Town Supervisor: Liaison between Town Board and Reuse Center Project Team. Approves operation projects, reviews Team programs and progress.

Team: Develops procedures, goals, programs, and provides an analysis of progress.

- Recycling (Program) Coordinator: – liaison between Town Supervisor and Reuse Center Project Team. Designates tasks, reviews inventory sheets for completeness and disposition, reviews project for efficiency, recommends new programs or program enhancement through public input, reports and troubleshoots (see Attachment 4).
- Marketing and Branding – targets new users, reviews strategy for marketing and sales (see Attachment 7).

- Staff – prepares information for efficiency studies, pulls and processes materials, does advertising, prepares visual aids and reports, provides input on development of educational program, and monitors inventory report (see Attachment 4).

First, the business structure will require two staff people working for 10, eight-hour shifts to re-structure the physical locations of trailers, storage, and merchandise while providing continued customer service. It is recommended that a Reuse Center sale area continue to be staffed twenty (20) hours per week by the Recycling Program Coordinator for sales and a part-time Administrative staff person for maintenance. Several options have been discussed and reviewed for continuing operations of the Reuse Program that has been established. An educational program will be developed to encourage incorporation of environmental topics into the curriculum that meets NYS MST guidelines and another promotional effort to schools to encourage them to include reusable items in their art, music, science, and math programs. These efforts are expected to effectively expand the program. The Recycling Program Coordinator will attend the quarterly Solid Waste Committee Meetings, sponsored by the Hudson Valley Regional Council, for networking opportunities and potential program input.

Management has over 21 years in the solid waste industry and working with governmental agencies. Additionally, the staff has 18 years of experience in solid waste management, including marketing and clerical support. The combined hands-on knowledge and work experience has prepared the MRDC team for operating a diversion and reuse-resale program.

## **IV. Financial Data**

For financial statements, Operating Costs and Start-Up Costs, for 2011 - see Attachment 14.

### **A. Funding**

Financial statements for 2009 and 2010 from the town's records will show the current program is progressing and meeting projected thresholds.

Program funding will be in the Recycling Center's annual Operating Budget under its own line item. Also included in the budget is an educational element for outreach programs which will be used in the development and production of educational materials—brochures, instruction sheets, ideas, white papers, etc. (Attachment 14).

Grant applications will be made to the NYSDEC and other funding sources to continue development and expansion the program.

### **B. Short-Term Goals**

A short-term goal of diverting an additional 25% or (500 pounds per day) from the waste stream is necessary to meet revenue projections.

## **C. Long-Term Goals**

The long-term goal of the program is to maximize diversion and create a self-sustaining program. To achieve this goal, it will be advantageous to work cooperatively with other not-for-profit and public benefit organizations.

- Ulster County municipalities and other surrounding counties in the region;
- Libraries and educational institutions;
- Hudson Valley Regional Council;
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation;
- New Paltz GreenWorks, ENCB, ENCC;
- Schools and town/county Chamber of Commerce;

*The time frame for this section to be developed around a five-year plan.*