Carpet Recycling in the Northwest:

CARE Annual Conference 2010
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Picture by N.Bolden SPU
What About Carpet Recycling in the Northwest?

• What’s interesting about the Northwest?
  – Population, Surroundings, Climate for Business

• What’s different about the Northwest?
  – Policies, Practices, Resources

• What’s happening in the Northwest?
  – Green Building, Green Purchasing, Recycled Materials Market Development
What’s Interesting About the Northwest?

Mt. Rainier, Washington
Not a lot of Recycled Carpet From NW Yet: Carpet Recycling Companies By Region

*Data provided by Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE) 2010*
About the Seattle Area

• Fast-growing region, people moving in for jobs and lifestyle.
• Doesn’t rain all the time.
• Population in the greater Seattle area is about 4,000,000
  – That’s a million less than in the greater Atlanta area, but with more land area, so less dense.
• Natural resource and technology industries – timber, salmon and seafood, software, biotech, aerospace.

• You might also recognize these Seattle products and companies:
  - outdoor gear (Recreational Equipment Inc - REI);
  - coffee (Starbucks); and
  - polite customer service (Nordstrom)

• Electricity mainly from hydropower, not coal or incineration; water supplied by snowmelt, rather than groundwater.
“SISFUR – Sustainable Infrastructure Systems for Urban Regions”

Atlanta and Seattle areas are the focus of a joint research project by Georgia Tech and University of Washington

“Discarded Carpet Modeling”:
- Estimates of inventory of carpet
- Estimates of life-span of carpet (10–15 years)
- Determined carpet amount available for recycling
SISFUR Data for Seattle:

• 1.2 million buildings, with 3.3 million sq.ft. of space
  1.8 m single family, 400K multi-family
  204K office 260K commercial;
  135K institutional 400K industrial

• 255,000 sq.yds. of carpet;
  – 165K single family, 44K multifamily

• 637,000 tons carpet inventory

• 43-64,000 tons annually discarded
  Using a weight of 5 lbs per sq yd (so 1 ton = 400 sq yds)
What’s Different About the Northwest?
Not much carpet being recycled from the Northwest yet:

Millions of Pounds of Carpet Recycled By Region. Data provided by CARE
"Pay-As-You-Throw" Charges for Garbage

- Micro (12 Gallon): $15.65
- Mini (20 Gallon): $19.15
- 32 Gallon: $24.85
- 60 Gallon: $49.70
- 90 Gallon: $49.70

Seattle Trash Can Sizes and Monthly Rates
Seattleites Recycle More:

• City-provided Curbside pickup:
  – All food waste
  – Most plastics
  – Paper and cardboard
  – Ferrous metals

• Producer take-back and other drop-off locations:
  – Motor oil, oil filters, antifreeze, car batteries, tires, pharmaceuticals, ink cartridges... (retail takeback)
  – Computers, tvs, fluorescent lamps (statewide producer organizations)
We Reduce Waste By Prohibiting It In The Garbage

- No recyclable paper
- No cans and bottles
- No “clean green” grass or yard waste
- No polystyrene food containers
- No “household hazardous waste”
- No fluorescent lamps, computers, tvs, car batteries, thermometers, thermostats
What’s Happening with Carpet in the Northwest?
Solid Waste Agencies Assess What’s Still in the Garbage, and How to Divert More
Carpet Recycling Efforts Are Being Prompted By Local Policies and Practices

• 50,000 tons of carpet landfilled annually in Seattle-King County.
• Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington have the largest number of green buildings of any cities in the U.S.
• Recycling costs less than garbage – in Seattle,
  – $140/ton to dump garbage.
  – Recycling is not taxed; garbage is taxed.
NW Carpet Recycling Strategy

Objectives:
- Bring carpet processing to the Northwest
- Build markets for recovered carpet materials

Putting the pieces together:
- Participation from WA, OR, CA, BC
- Networking, establishing relationships
- Listening to each others’ interests and needs, bringing together range of abilities and voices
- Working outside “the usual channels"
NW Carpet Recycling Strategy

• “Recycling means business” – we’re emphasizing economic development
• Collaboration among local businesses and with university programs and talent
• Local manufacturers engaged as potential end markets for recovered material (fiber, calcium carbonate, etc.)
NW Carpet Recycling Strategy

• Input from local and national businesses
• Recommend multi-faceted actions for
  – Preventing asbestos in flooring removal
  – Developing end markets for recovered materials, especially locally
  – Increasing demand for carpet recycling from A&D, property owners, public agencies
  – Increasing recycling infrastructure
• Reports and resources at
  www.kingcounty.gov/linkup
Thank You --

Questions?

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