

# Haines Waste Management Survey Results Analysis

## SUMMARY

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### Introduction

#### Purpose

Charting the course for development of a comprehensive community solid waste management program requires an appreciation of what we do and what we think now. To gain that appreciation, Haines Borough households were surveyed for habits and attitudes about solid waste issues and community values February 3 through March 31, 2014 utilizing the SurveyMonkey.com ® platform. This is a report of summarized or highlighted survey results.

#### Methodology

I developed the survey under the tutelage of Kathleen DiLorenzo, Assistant Professor of Public Administration at the School of Management, University of Alaska Southeast. Probability sampling methods were employed. The survey population was determined to be Haines Borough households represented by US postal addresses. The sampling frame was a list of postal addresses at zip code 99827 clear of corporate businesses, associations, organizations and apartment complexes. Proprietors were substituted for business names when known; households with more than one postal box were collapsed into one and when two or more distinct households utilized one US postal box, the address was duplicated to allow for an accurate household count.

The population was 1279 households.<sup>1</sup> Systematic sampling was employed; after random selection of the first address, every sixth household on the sampling frame was selected. The first mail out went to 213 randomly-selected households. Ninety-seven of those randomly-selected participants were followed up by telephone. A second mail out went to 100 different randomly selected households. In total, ninety-five households responded.<sup>2</sup>

69% of respondents reside within the townsite service area. 31% reside in the borough outside of the townsite service area and within zip code 99827.

#### Confidence and Accuracy

95 households participated, though not all respondents answered every question. Confidence and accuracy for survey results are therefore not consistent. However I am 90% confident that the results generally are accurate within 8.2%.<sup>3</sup> This is not a strong endorsement; however, it is adequate for drawing general conclusions.

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<sup>1</sup> The US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2008-2012 estimates 1139 households in the Haines Borough.

<sup>2</sup> The survey was designed to direct proprietors of businesses generating more than 1 cubic yard of solid waste per week to a slightly different set of questions focused on commercial solid waste issues. However, only 5 responses were captured. That response level is not significant, and those responses were set aside. See Appendix: "Commercial Waste in a Nutshell."

<sup>3</sup> See attached analysis of the survey construction provided by Raosoft.

## Highlighted Survey Results

### A. Practices/Behavior

- 62% of households **compost**
- 86% of households **self-haul** to a collection site (either Acme or CWS)
  - 57% self-haul to Acme Transfer.
  - 29% self-haul to CWS
  - 78% of households self-haul to Haines Friends of Recycling
- 15% of households **store, bury or burn** solid waste on private property
- **Recycling**
  - 91% of households recycle
  - 91% of households that self-haul to Acme also self-haul recyclables to HFR
  - 23% of households that self-haul to CWS sort for recyclables
  - Materials recycled by the households that recycle:
    - Metals (Al, Sn): 91%
    - Glass: 87%
    - Plastic: 78%
    - Cardboard, paper, newsprint: 67%
    - Fabric: 27%
- 81% of households generate 32 gallons or less of solid waste per week. <sup>4</sup>
- 1% generates more than 64 gallons per week
- 98% of all households spend less than 2 hours per week managing household waste, <sup>5</sup> and 81% feel that is just the right amount of time. 6% of households feel that they spend too much time dealing with garbage issues. 14% of households feel guilty about not spending enough time to do a “good job.”

### B. Economics

- 57% of households spend \$1 - \$20 cash per month to dispose/recycle solid waste
- 82% of households spend \$1 - \$49 cash per month to dispose/recycle solid waste
- 74% of households are satisfied with what they are paying to dispose/recycle solid waste
- 11% of households spend \$0 on household solid waste management
- 11% of households would pay more for convenience

### C. Community Values

- 55% of households think it is important/critical that all households compost
- 88% of households think it is important/critical that all households recycle
- 87% of households think it is important/critical that all households dispose of solid waste “properly.”
- 92% of households think it is important/critical that the community has a regulated landfill for inert materials

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<sup>4</sup> The US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2008-2012 reports that 33% of the households in the Haines Borough are single-person households.

<sup>5</sup> 71% spend less than one hour.

#### D. Perceptions

- Households are about equally divided between thinking that the community has a problem managing its solid waste and not. The greatest number, 34%, have no opinion.
- There is no discernable agreement about the nature of the problem among those who think there is a problem. By slim margins, the ranking of possible reasons are:
  - Lack of enforcement against littering and dumping
  - Lack of ordinances requiring “proper” disposal
  - Complicated scheduling for disposal, distances to travel
  - Cost is too high
- Households are most bothered by seeing litter in public places (85%). Secondarily, households are bothered by other households burning plastics and solid waste (72%).<sup>6</sup> 52% of households are bothered by seeing household trash in public dumpsters.

#### E. System Solutions

- Overwhelmingly (88%), the community supports a program of solid waste management that separates
  - biodegradable materials for compost
  - Recyclables for export
  - Mixed waste for export
  - Inert material for landfill
- Landfilling everything except recyclables locally is preferred to exporting all materials
- The community does not support a property tax to pay for a municipal solid waste management program
- If a universal municipal solid waste program were initiated, the community prefers that it be financed by user fees.

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<sup>6</sup> The response is not a measure of the % of households that are actually bothered by this activity; respondents were asked to rank what bothers them most when given a list of potentially bothersome activities.

## Appendix

Commercial waste in a nutshell. We recognized in designing the survey that commercial waste issues are not only more voluminous, but also specialized. The clinic generates hazardous waste; the brewery generates a biodegradable waste very different from the biodegradable wastes generated by the food service industry; retail and grocery generates cardboard and manufacturers and cottage industries generate waste unique to their product. A randomly selected sample would not give us a general picture of the commercial profile because the population is too small. Nonetheless, we learned these things from a very small sample of commercial accounts:

- Proprietors combine their household waste with their commercial wastes.
- A higher % of commercial accounts burn their waste than do households.
- Commercial accounts generally sort and recycle as households do: Metals, glass, plastics, cardboard
- Sorting & Recycling is an economic choice: it saves money for a business
- Lack of space is the reason why a business would not recycle
- A local landfill is important
- The economic benefit of community-wide composting is unknown

Comments offered on methods/concerns for managing solid waste in Haines: 34 people offered comments. I have attempted to categorize the issues that were raised to quantify or otherwise measure the degree of concern around that particular category. My own interests will color my interpretation of comments, but I did my best to delineate between those who would appear to support government regulation and those who would not. I conclude that there is a general sense of need for government regulation even among those who don't state it directly; for example, if a response is "there should be more public garbage cans around town" or "provide neighborhood transfer stations where we could all put our garbage" or "offer free pick up of recyclables" I categorized all as supportive of intervention, as I do not see how to provide these services without government intervention. Many issues were raised; I included unique comments to stimulate discussion. Actual responses are included in their entirety for your interpretation.

A	OPPOSE MANDATORY PICKUP	2
B	ENFORCE LITTER/JUNK/ANTIBURNING CODE	3
C	SUPPORT MANDATORY RECYCLING	10
D	SUPPORT CURBSIDE PICKUP W/RECYCLING	4
E	SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSFER STATIONS W/RECYCLING	11
F	TAX WASTEFUL PACKAGING	1
G	PROVIDE MORE PUBLIC GARBAGE CANS	3
H	NEED MORE OPPORTUNITY FOR HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL	2
I	INSTALL COIN-OPERATED "PAY FOR WASTE" STATION FOR VISITORS	1
J	SEPARATE OUT CONSTRUCTION ITEMS FOR RESALE	1
K	BEARS (and dogs) MAKE COMPOSTING & CURBSIDE PICKUP UNREASONABLE (garbage in driveways waiting for pick-up)	2

Attachments:

(1) Q18 Comments on Methods for Managing Solid Waste (3 pages)

(2) Raosoft ® Survey Structure Analysis