Surprise Recycling

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What Our Project Is About

Community Partners:

- Waste Management, Surprise Residents

Sustainability Challenge Area:

- Waste Management & Municipal Recycling Program

Objective:

Creative strategies to enhance the solid waste/recycling programs to:

- Increasing waste diversion- (40% in 3-5 Yrs) and recycling tonnages
- Reducing recycling contamination rates to under 15%

Research Questions

- Sources of contamination?
- Current educational outreach?
- Is recycling mandatory?
- What has been learned from talking to the community?
- Servicing company & type of collection (single or dual stream)
- Have other municipal programs been researched?
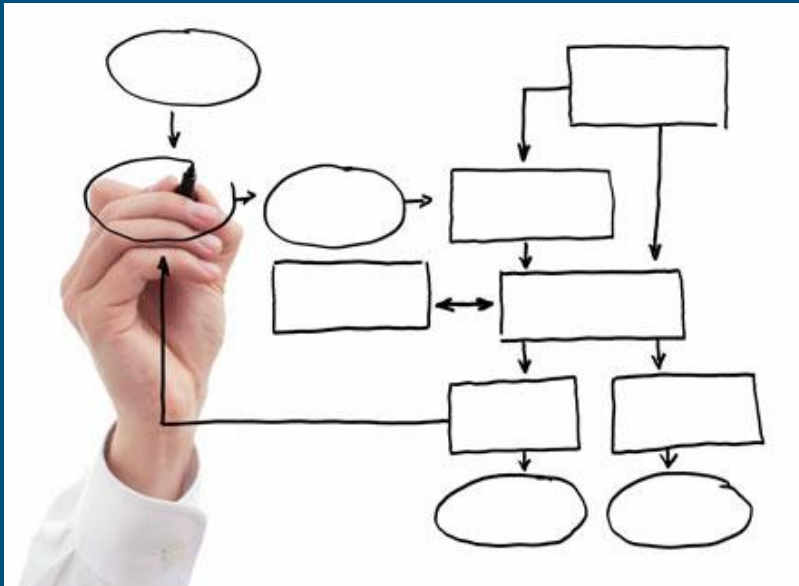- What has been the outcome of the educational programs implemented?

How has the project progressed?

Overview of the Steps of the Research Project

- Understand the problem/challenges for the City of Surprise
- Overall objectives- Short Term & Long Term Solutions
- Researched other municipal program success

Data Collection

Methods of collecting data/research and contacting stakeholders

- Primary:
  - Interview with Christina Betz
- Secondary:
  - Online research

Data collected/engagements with stakeholders

- Information on the recycling contract
- What the education efforts were and how they were implemented

Results & Findings

Intellectual/Scientific Lessons Learned

- Education is key
- Consistency is needed
- Recycling is very policy dependent
- Difference between single/dual stream

Personal/Group Lessons Learned

- Waste Management/Recycling is a business
- Learning from other successes

How are these lessons linked with the Key Competencies of Sustainability

- Recycling is socially, politically and economically driven

Proposed Solutions

Short term solutions

- Send out emails in addition to the Surprise Progress magazine
- Partnering with community groups
- Community drop-off events
- Incentive and encouragement program- RecycleBank
- EPA's WasteWise
- Contamination notification
- Survey
- Addressing top contaminants in outreach materials

Proposed Solutions

Long term solutions

- Renegotiating contracts with Waste Management
- Disposal fees to increase diversion
- Implement Zero Waste Program
  - Try to create unified efforts with other municipalities
- Mandatory state recycling policy

Current Challenges

What do you still need to know or learn in order to do your project?

- Budget limitations with efforts to improve the recycling program?
- Would the city be willing to implement a zero waste program?
- Can we determine the efficacy of education/outreach?

What other challenges are you still facing?

- Recycling not mandatory by the state
- Viability of proposed solutions
- Lack of stakeholder communication from residents

How can your team, instructors, peers, help you face them.

- Input knowledge of successful programs
- Policy implementation

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