



**“LANDFILLED” DISCUSSION SERIES
PUBLIC FEEDBACK**

Date: April 23, 2008

Time: 8:30–10 a.m.

Location: Bishop Ward High School

Facilitator: Dan Blom

Recorder: Stephanie Williams

Other observers: Jim Schneweis

Number of participants: 25

Do you know who picks up your trash?

Half or less know who picks up their trash

How old will you be when the landfills close?

34

What will you be doing then?

Working

How is trash paid for?

Take out city tax

How many of you know how much it costs?

- \$290 a month
- That's too high
- That's too low
- \$175
- *Whispers: How much is it really?*

How much does gas cost?

- \$3.49
- \$3.50

How much will it cost when you're 34?

- \$5
- More like \$10

How many trash trucks go up and down your street each week?

Just Deffenbaugh

What do you think should be done to conserve landfill space?

- Slow down filling up the landfills
- I kind of disagree because there's no real way to slow it down. You could slow it down to some degree, but you've got to find other ways to get rid of it
- You need to speed up the process of putting in new landfills

Where are we going to put a landfill?

- Desert
- Put it where nobody lives — far away. Because it stinks.
- It would be hazardous to have it here at the school.
- Don't want it in their neighborhood.

Any environmental issues with placing a landfill in the desert?

Change the animals' habitat so they're all out of whack because of it

What else could we do with trash besides stick it in a landfill?

Recycle it

How much trash do you throw away and how?

- Four bags per week
- In Missouri, you have to buy a tag if you want to throw away more than two bags ("pay as you throw")
- There's a family over on Pacific that puts out seven bags
- Two kids in my family, four adults, we put out six bags of trash each week
- We probably have about eight or nine. There are six people in my family.
- I don't bother counting them, I just throw them out.
- Most people have between two and five bags.
- *Facilitator: More than 100 bags per week, just from you guys.*

What's in those bags?

- Plastic
- Glass
- Diapers
- Metal
- Food
- A lot of plastic (food containers)
- Two people have compost heaps for grass, but not for coffee grounds. The other uses it for food waste.

What other ways could we get rid of our trash?

- Shoot it off into space. Think it's a good idea. Get it out of here. Might be too expensive.
- Turn it into renewable energy. Figure out ways to ... I don't know ... turn it into energy.

Does it bother you that landfills are filling up and this isn't settled?

- Yeah.
- It makes me more confused.
- There's this one big problem and there's one perfect solution, but no one can figure it out.

- I think adults need to solve it, be taking steps to fix the problem.
- Adults should help us more because usually it's the kids who want to recycle. I can't drive. I've tried to recycle cans before, but my family won't drive me to the recycling center.
- I try to recycle more than my family does.

Is there a disconnect between what your family does and what you do or want to do? What's the difference?

- *Most believe that recycling is the right thing to do. Several aren't sure.*
- They just kind of blindly throw stuff away. They're in such a rush; they put stuff in the trash.
- There weren't all these problems when our parents were kids, so they don't really care about recycling.
- My parents don't mean to, but that's the way they were raised. They don't really care.
- My family recycles cans a lot. My dad drinks a lot. We get a truck and crush them ourselves. We take them all the way to this place where they recycle them. Sometimes they pay. We do that every month.
- When we cut the grass, we spread it on the ground. We grow our own vegetables. We let fruit compost on the ground (no heap).

Do you recycle?

- *About one-third to one-half recycle nothing in their households.*
- I don't know what this is called, but my dad puts egg shells on the plants. He usually saves them and puts them back in the carton.

Do you know what can be recycled?

- When they give you the blue bin, the paper goes in there.
- About a half to a quarter of the stuff that goes in the trash can be recycled.
- Glass
- Cans
- Plastic
- Paper
- Cardboard
- Telephone books
- Some electronics, like computers, can be refurbished.
- Batteries shouldn't be thrown away because of the acid.
- Many people use rechargeable batteries. Most throw them away.

What if there were no more landfills?

- Start recycling
- Dig a hole in the backyard
- Can't burn it because of air pollution
- You want to reuse as much as you can
- You have to figure out another solution for the stuff that can't be reused or recycled
- Instead of throwing away, reuse things
- When you go to the grocery store, go to the deli instead of the pre-packaged meat so you can recycle the paper
- But that might be more expensive
- Tastes better and healthier if you get it from the deli, but it's more expensive

- I'm not the one paying the bills to do it, so I can't say

What's the most inconvenient thing about recycling?

- You don't feel like doing it if you're ready to go. It takes up time.
- Laziness.
- It's a pain to do it.
- The bin that we have is too small. It won't hold all the stuff.
- Some of the older adults won't know about it because it wasn't their problem. They don't have enough education.
- Would your parents recycle if their neighbors did it?
- Yeah.
- **If there was a tax break?**
- Probably.

A little more than half think they're parents would do it if there was a reward.

Would you be embarrassed if your house was one of the only ones on the street that didn't recycle?

- Most say yes.
- I think I'd probably convince them to do it.
- Most think they could talk their parents into doing it.
- Mom talked me into it.
- Most have not talked to their parents about it.
- One parent is convinced that it's worthwhile to go green, another is not.
- Some say that both parents are convinced.
- About one-quarter said it would be a hard sell.
- They told me, 'I'm not going for this whole Al Gore wa-wa-wa-wa-wa.'

What about your school? What's the school's policy on recycling?

- You can recycle paper
- You can recycle cans—a thing that squishes it.
- Can't recycle plastic

What should the school be doing?

- We can probably tell the school as much as we want, but it's up to them to do it.
- Stuff still goes in the trash that could be recycled.
- Some people get almost no food, but the tray still gets thrown away. They're Styrofoam.
- They don't even really need to use the tray.

What about your friends at other schools?

- They have little signs about what's supposed to be recycled
- My friend's school saves their paper bags and recycles them

How much of Bishop Ward's trash could be recycled?

- All of it
- 75 percent
- 90 to 99 percent

- It's all paper and plastic
- Most people don't even eat all that they get
- Teacher says 50. More realistically—80 percent.
- Those Styrofoam trays could be reused or washed.

Have you been to EarthWorks?

- They had, like, compactors and stuff.
- (They weigh the trash to see how much you generate.)

What could be recycled?

- There's still the whole thing of motivation
- No one wants to do it
- It's just the motivation of doing it and changing habits. About three-quarters of people still wouldn't do it.

What's the ideal recycling system?

- Separate things that say glass, plastic and all that. It has everything. It's labeled and someone would come and get it.
- A big bin that's all organized. You could do neighborhood things. In my neighborhood we have a dumpster; it's a recycling dumpster. We could put stuff there that wouldn't go into the little bin.
- It would be nice if we just threw everything in one place.
- Technology is gonna make it so we don't have to worry about it.
- Something that makes it easy.
- Neighborhood compost bin.
- Like a dumpster on the end of your street. So you only have to make one trip. It wouldn't be easiest, but it would be closer.

Should you be paid for recycling?

- No.
- It's your responsibility.
- I think it would encourage people.
- You can't make people change their mind. If you show them the benefits, maybe you'll be able to persuade them.
- Have education for people who don't recycle do they can learn about it.
- People who don't recycle should be penalized. You should pay for your trash, not your recycling.
- In a way, it's like they're (the people who don't recycle) contributing to pollution.

How long will you live?

- 74
- Until the year 2090
- It's scary because we live in a tough world: global warming, food crisis, oil, etc.
- There could be new problems that arise that we haven't ever even thought of
- What about my kids and grandkids?

You could try and convince the grocery stores to use plastic jugs rather than glass jugs. Encourage people to bring their own bags.

Who do you think should be responsible for working on this?

- The city
- President/government
- Anyone who cares, including us

Two things that you could do tomorrow that would make a difference

- Tell other people
- Carry your own food at lunch
- Food scraps go into compost pile
- We have curbside, but a lot of people don't have it out. They'll even deliver the bin. Give the number of the place that delivers the bins to neighbors.
- Start organizing my little bins so I have a place to put it.
- Use Tupperware for lunch.
- Buy environmentally friendly items, things that don't have too much packaging

Last comments:

We can send letters to our government. They'll talk about it, but they'll take like 10 years to do it. Have rallies, protest.

Questions:

Why does it take 10 years to build a landfill?