

Cities Keep the Garbage from Piling Up

Disposal of garbage is one of the most recognizable and most widely used services a city undertakes. A city can choose to operate its own garbage collection systems or grant an exclusive franchise to a private company that handles the solid waste collection within the corporate boundaries of the city.

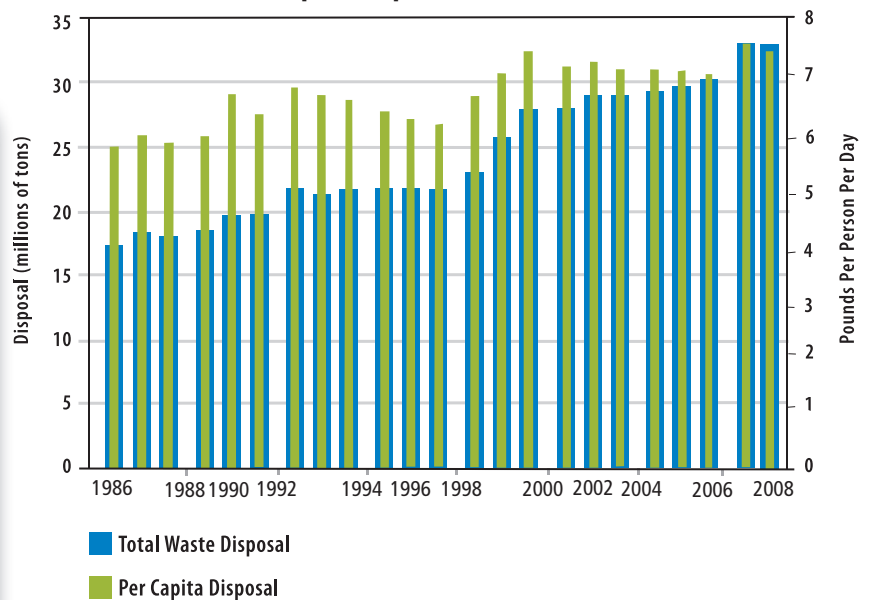
According to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Texans in 2008 disposed of approximately 33.08 million tons of municipal solid waste in 191 landfills. Municipal solid waste includes everyday items such as grass clippings, household garbage, newspapers, food scraps, clothing, bottles, paint, batteries, and many other types of



Did You Know?

Cities have been authorized to provide, or contract with a private company to provide, exclusive garbage collection services within city limits since 1971. Texas law allows for exclusive collection to preserve the public health and safety of all the residents of a city. Uncollected garbage can easily result in various health problems. This law routinely comes under attack from certain groups. But the bottom line is that timely, efficient, and effective collection through municipal service prevents problems from occurring. Open piles of garbage attract disease-carrying rodents and insects and often wash into drainage systems, where they contribute to floods and waterborne disease. To that end, at least two Texas court cases have upheld the authority of a city to enter into an exclusive agreement without competitive bids.

Solid Waste Disposal And Per Capita Disposal Rate In Texas



Disposal refers only to solid waste received by permitted landfills. Source: TCEQ, Municipal Solid Waste in Texas: A Year in Review - FY2008 Data Summary and Analysis (January 2010)

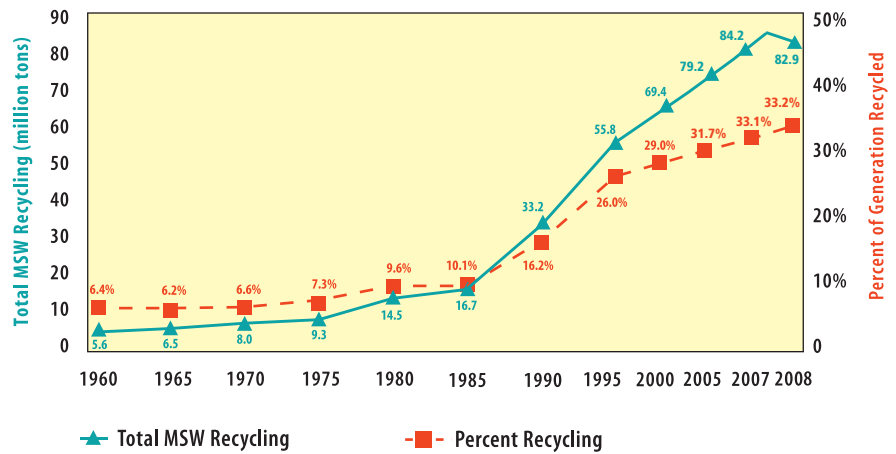
residential, commercial, and construction waste. In response to the growing concerns over increases in municipal solid waste, many cities offer recycling programs for their citizens.

The benefits of recycling programs are twofold. First, they help to reduce the production of solid waste that must be disposed of by a city. Second, they generally help to significantly reduce the costs of operating a municipal solid waste disposal system. Overall, recycling has a positive net economic effect for the entire state. According to the TCEQ, the recycling industry in Texas employs approximately 20,000 people in more than 400 firms. Additionally, more than \$2.8 billion in value is added annually to the state's economy through the upgrading or processing of recycled

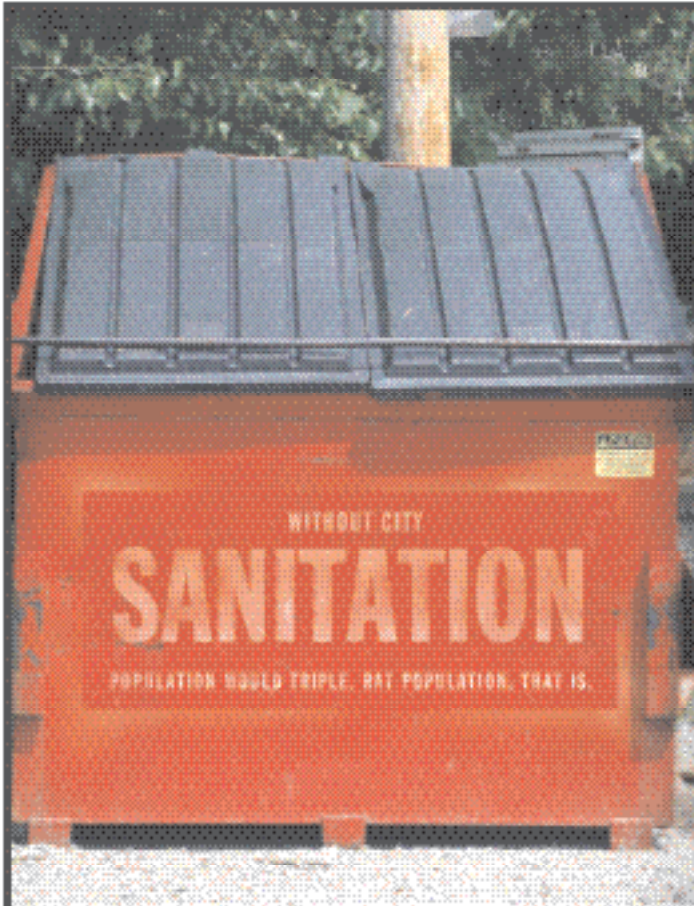
materials. Encouraging residents to participate in municipal recycling programs is an ongoing educational process. Of course, statewide recycling mandates wouldn't take into account the various factors that make

different parts of Texas unique. Recycling should be implemented locally in a way that is appropriate for each city. ★

Recycling of Municipal Solid Waste in the United States 1960-2008



Source: EPA, Municipal Solid Waste Generation, Recycling, and Disposal in the United States: Facts and Figures for 2008 (November 2009)



The things you don't think about, cities provide. Like streets, parks, utilities, and safety. But cities can't function with their hands tied by restrictive laws or unfunded state and federal mandates. Cities need options to build a better future. It's in everybody's best interest.



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