

**Spokane Regional Solid Waste System:  
Behaviors and Perceptions in 2007 Among  
Spokane County Residents About Recycling**

*May 18, 2007*

*Synopsis of Results, Graphic Summary,  
and Text of Responses to Open-Ended Questions*  
(with text of questionnaire)

Prepared by:

**Strategic Research Associates**

**Contact: Steven Dean**

101 West Cataldo, Suite 200

Spokane, WA 99201

(509) 324-6960



**Strategic Research**  
ASSOCIATES

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# Research Objectives

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In March 2007, the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System commissioned Strategic Research Associates to conduct a telephone survey among Spokane County heads-of-household to explore behaviors toward and perceptions about recycling. The primary objectives of the survey were to identify factors differentiating frequent recyclers from others, and to explore the reasons why some households enthusiastically take part in the area's recycling programs and others do not. The survey was also intended to explore the desirability of specific changes to recycling program options.

These specific measurement areas were to be addressed:

- **Current household recycling behaviors**
- **General perceptions about recycling**
- **Perceptions about curbside recycling service**
- **Interest in curbside recycling service for those not currently receiving it**
- **Differences related to respondent background factors**

The reports that follow are sub-divided by the first four objectives. The last was a general objective applicable within all sections.



# Executive Capsule Review of Primary Findings

This two page *Executive Capsule Review* provides a quick summary of selected survey findings. The *Synopsis of Results* (pages 7 to 17) provides a more thorough summary, while a detailed analysis is given in this volume's *Graphic Summary* sections.

- **Current household recycling behaviors**

Among 520 respondents, almost half (47%) said they were “very familiar” with their household's recycling options, while 40% said they were “moderately familiar.” Two in three (66%) said their household currently has curbside recycling service. Among the 474 respondents living in single family residences or in condominiums smaller than a five-plex, 71% reported having the service. Among those living in an apartment or a condominium larger than a four-plex, 47% were using their complex's centrally located recycling container. Half (49%) of all households had visited a recycling center within the last six months (with the highest usage rates recorded by those living in the more rural areas of Spokane County). Overall, 78% were consistently using one of the three recycling methods – curbside service, a centrally located container, and/or a recycling center. These frequent recyclers were more likely than infrequent ones to be older, more affluent, living in single family homes (or condominiums smaller than a five-plex) in North Spokane County, receiving curbside recycling service, and exhibiting higher familiarity with their recycling options.

- **General perceptions about recycling**

Frequent recyclers tended to cite protection of the environment as the driver motivating their household's participation in recycling. Infrequent recyclers were most likely to cite inconvenience, lack of need, lack of familiarity, and lack of motivation (in this order) as primary reasons for their lack of participation. Among all respondents, 41% were “very satisfied” with their recycling options and 39% “moderately” so. Frequent recyclers, those familiar with their options, and those receiving curbside service were over twice as likely as others to respond with “very satisfied.” Those “very satisfied” were likely to cite their access to curbside service and its convenience as reasons, while others complained about restrictions on the range of items allowable, the lack of access to curbside service, and seeming lack of information about options. Regarding general attitudes toward recycling, almost all agreed that recycling was important to protect the environment and it was the right thing to do. However, four in ten (41%) agreed about needing more information, and 34% that recycling tends to be inconvenient. Thirty-eight percent (38%) agreed that they would be willing to pay more to make recycling more convenient.

- **Perceptions about curbside recycling service**

Almost half of those with curbside recycling service said allowing a wider range of items or not requiring removal of tin can labels would make the service “much more convenient.” (Allowing a wider range of items was especially appealing to frequent recyclers.) About one-third said the same for providing clearer instructions, a wheeled recycling bin, and a larger bin. Service users were most willing to pay extra to recycle all types of plastics, and moderately interested in paying to recycle junk mail and cereal boxes. Electronics and computers, computer paper, and food waste generated less enthusiasm. The additional fee to pay to allow a wider range of items, a majority agreed, should range between \$1 and \$3.

# Executive Capsule Review of Primary Findings (cont.)

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- **Interest in curbside recycling service for those not currently receiving it**

Among those without current access to curbside recycling service, 18% said they would pay to acquire it, while 23% were not sure. Respondents in the more rural areas of the county were about three times more likely than those in the more densely populated North to say they would pay for service. The most affluent were also more likely than others to say they would pay to receive it. Among those without the service but willing to pay for it (or not sure), 75% said \$5 per month would be an acceptable fee, and 87%, \$3.

# How the Survey was Conducted

## ● A telephone survey with 520 completed interviews

- The population of interest was defined to include heads-of-household, aged 18 and older, currently living within the boundary of Spokane County. (Heads-of-household were the designated target because they could answer for their household's behavior as well as their own.)
- Interviewing was conducted between April 23 and May 2, 2007.
- Selection of respondents was conducted as follows:
  - Households were randomly selected using a form of random digit dialing. (Residential prefix numbers known to cover Spokane County's geographic area were attached to randomly generated suffix numbers.) This provided coverage of both listed and unlisted numbers. Interviewers asked to speak to the adult male or female head-of-household (with only one person in the household being interviewed).
  - To prevent over- or under-representation of any gender or age group, selection of respondents was conducted so that sample gender-by-age proportions would closely match the corresponding proportions in the county's adult population. This procedure not only ensured that no age or gender group was over- or under-represented in the sample, it also helped to minimize sample-versus-population discrepancies for other demographic background variables. Table 1 shows a comparison of sample-versus-population proportions.
- Most interviews were conducted between 4PM and 9PM (local time) on weekdays and between 10AM and 5PM on weekends. A few interviews were administered during weekday daytime hours to contact those difficult to reach in the evening. Interviewing was conducted by Mountain West Research Center, a professional field research organization located in Pocatello, Idaho. The computer-aided workstations used by interviewers for this survey allowed randomization and rotation of question order, reducing potential biases. A significant proportion of interviews were monitored on-line to verify for courtesy and completeness of interviewing. All interviewers working on this project were professionally trained and supervised.
- To reach a qualified contact, interviewers were required to attempt a minimum of four call attempts per targeted telephone number.

## ● The questionnaire

The questionnaire included 67 questions, four of which were unaided (where a list of response options was not read). Because of skip patterns, respondents were not required to answer every question. A single interview took, on average, 11 minutes to administer.

# How the Survey was Conducted (cont.)

- **Precision of estimates (with a sample of 520)**

- At 95% confidence:  $\pm 4.3\%$
- At 90% confidence:  $\pm 3.6\%$
- Margins of error for sub-groups (for example, females or those aged 18 to 34) are less precise.

- **Presentation of results**

- This volume is divided into sections. The presentation includes, in order, *Contents of this Report*, *Research Objectives*, *Executive Capsule Review of Primary Findings*, *How the Survey was Conducted*, *Synopsis of Results*, and *Graphic Summary*. The *Graphic Summary* section expands upon the *Synopsis of Results* to show supporting details using a chart-based format. Appendices include a *Verbatim Responses* section listing word-for-word responses to unaided survey questions (Q12, Q13, Q16, and Q21) and a *Questionnaire* section displaying an annotated copy of the questionnaire with baseline results.

The *Synopsis* provides a short overview of results. The *Graphic Summary* section offers a detailed and comprehensive review. A companion volume of extensive crosstabulated results augments the presentation in this volume.

- Regarding the charts displayed in this volume:
  - Responses to unaided questions were categorized and coded, with the coded results included in quantitative summaries.
  - All percentages are shown rounded to integer digits to enhance ease of review and interpretation. Because of this rounding, totals may not always sum to 100%, but displayed values are nevertheless correct. Chart bar lengths reflect exact (unrounded) values, which is why two bars marked with the same value may sometimes vary slightly in length.
  - Chart labels shown in uppercase identify a list of response options to a single question (or a list of background category measurements). Labels shown in lowercase identify lists of survey questions, the results of which are to be compared.
  - Appropriate statistical tests were sometimes conducted to determine whether chance could be excluded from the list of possible causes of differences or associations in the sample data. For statistical tests, a probability level of .05 was used as the criterion to determine a statistically significant result. (The term “marginally significant” is sometimes used to refer to a result significant at the .10 level.) Statistically significant results are noted in the summaries and chart annotations.

# How the Survey was Conducted (cont.)

- **The sample versus target population**

Respondent selection was conducted so the sample's gender-by-age composition would match Spokane County's. (Target proportions for those aged 18 to 34 were slightly reduced, as described in the footnote to Table 1.) Table 1, comparing target population and sample proportions, indicates that no population group was over- or under-represented in the sample.

**Table 1**  
**Comparison of Target Population and Sample Compositions**

Category	Population Target	Sample Outcome
Males 18 to 34*	13.6%	13.1%
Males 35 to 54	21.6%	21.7%
Males 55+	12.9%	13.5%
Females 18 to 34*	13.4%	12.9%
Females 35 to 54	21.8%	21.9%
Females 55+	16.7%	16.9%
<b>Total*</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*\* Population targets for males and females aged 18 to 34 were each reduced slightly more than two percentage points (with other targets proportionately increased) to reflect that some in this age group have not acquired head-of-household status.*

Respondent background category sub-sample sizes are listed in Figures 1 to 3 in the *Graphic Summary Preface* (“Summary of Respondent Background Characteristics”) and in Figures 56 to 59 in the *Graphic Summary Addendum* (“Respondent Background Characteristics”).

# Synopsis of Results

## ● **Current household recycling behaviors** (Figures 4 through 19 in *Graphic Summary Section One*)

- **Degree of familiarity with recycling options:** Among 520 respondents, almost half (47%) described themselves as being “very familiar” with their household’s recycling options, while 40% said they were “moderately familiar.” Only 12% rated themselves “not very” or “not at all familiar” with their options. (The rest did not offer an answer.)

Those aged 35 or older, the more affluent, and those eligible to receive or currently receiving curbside recycling service were more likely than their opposites claim familiarity with recycling options. Frequent recyclers – defined here as using curbside service at least twice a month, using an apartment or condominium recycling container at least “a few times a month,” or having used any recycling center at least twice within the last six months – were 2.5 times more likely than others to judge themselves “very familiar.” Only 6% of frequent recyclers were “not very” or “not at all” familiar with their recycling options, versus 36% for infrequent recyclers.

- **Curbside recycling service:** Two in three (66%) said their household currently has curbside recycling service. Among those eligible to receive such service – the 474 respondents who reported living in single family residences or in condominiums smaller than a five-plex – 71% reported having the service. Older respondents, the more affluent, those living in the more densely populated northern portion of the county, frequent recyclers, and those familiar with their recycling options were significantly more likely than others to acknowledge receiving curbside service.

Among the 341 respondents with the service, two-thirds (67%) said they use it every week; 19%, two to three times a month; and 14%, once a month or less (including 4% who said “never”). That is, those with access to curbside recycling service were using it, on average, about 3.2 times a month. This usage rate, however, varied significantly by degree of familiarity with recycling options and by affluence level. The rate among those with the strongest familiarity was 60% higher than the rate among the weakest, and those with a household income above \$75,000 were using curbside recycling at a 20% higher rate than those below \$35,000.

- **Awareness and behaviors regarding specific recyclable items:** Among the 327 with access to and using curbside recycling service, these results, shown in Table 2, were observed:
  - **Item-by-item recycling rates:** Table 2’s results indicate that over eight in ten said they currently recycle plastic bottles, cardboard boxes, glass, newspapers, tin cans, and/or aluminum cans. Rates for magazines (63%) and batteries or cellphones (43%) were well below the others, suggesting some confusion exists about their recyclability.
  - **Item-by-item recycling awareness:** As shown in the fourth column of Table 2, over nine in ten were aware that plastic bottles, cardboard boxes, glass, newspapers, tin cans and aluminum cans could be recycled using curbside service. However, only 62% were aware batteries and cellphones could be processed, and 79%, magazines.

## Synopsis of Results (cont.)

**Table 2**  
**Recycling and Awareness Rates for Recyclable Items**  
**Among Those with Curbside Recycling Service (n=327)**

<b>Recyclable Item</b>	<b>Recycle Using Curbside Service</b>	<b>Not Recycled but Aware this Item is Recyclable</b>	<b>Total Awareness About this Item's Recyclability*</b>
Plastic bottles	90%	6%	96%
Cardboard boxes	86%	9%	95%
Glass	84%	11%	95%
Newspapers	83%	16%	99%
Tin cans	83%	11%	93%
Aluminum cans	82%	17%	99%
Magazines	63%	16%	79%
Batteries or cellphones	43%	20%	62%

\* For each row, the sums of the percentages in columns two and three

Half (48%) claimed to be currently recycling all six of the top-ranked items in Table 2 (plastic bottles, cardboard boxes, glass, newspapers, tin cans, and aluminum cans), while 19% said they recycle all items listed in the table.

- **Use of an apartment's or condominium's centrally located recycling container:** Among those not receiving curbside service and identifying themselves as living in an apartment or a condominium larger than a four-plex, half (47%) said they use their complex's centrally located recycling container. Among these, the majority (66%) said they were using it at least once a week.
- **Use of recycling centers:** Among all respondents, 49% said they had used at least one recycling center within the last six months. The more affluent, those residing in the more rural areas in Spokane County (outside the more densely populated northern area of the county), those without access to curbside recycling, more frequent recyclers, and those more familiar with their recycling options, were significantly more likely than others to report visiting a center. Those living in single family residences or condominiums were also more likely to use one. (Among apartment and larger condominium dwellers, only 33% had used one.) The highest usage rate (73%) was produced by those living outside the North Spokane County area. (North Spokane County recorded 46%.)

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

Among the 256 households having used a recycling center within the last six months, 29% had made only one visit; 38%, two to three; and 33%, four or more. (The rest did not answer.)

- **Characteristics of frequent recyclers:** Frequent recyclers, comprising 78% of the total sample, were defined to be those with access to and using curbside recycling service at least twice a month, using a centrally located apartment or condominium recycling container at least “a few times a month,” or using any recycling center at least twice within the last six months. These respondents (and households) were more likely than others to exhibit these characteristics:
  - A head-of-household aged 35 or older
  - More affluent
  - Living in North Spokane County (because of greater access to curbside recycling service)
  - Living in residences (single family homes or condominiums smaller than a five-plex) eligible for curbside service
  - Currently receiving curbside recycling service
  - More familiar than others with recycling options

Frequent recyclers were more likely than others to highly rate the effectiveness of the area’s recycling programs, their satisfaction with available recycling options, and their enthusiasm about recycling (as described below).

Detailed findings and additional results can be found in *Graphic Summary Section One (“Current Household Recycling Behaviors”)*.

- **General perceptions about recycling** (Figures 20 through 44 in *Graphic Summary Section Two*)
  - **Motivations for more frequent, and less frequent, recycling:** The 407 respondents classified as “frequent recyclers” were asked to explain, unaided, their household’s most important motivation(s) for recycling. Their most frequently cited (categorized) answers, listed in the first column of Table 3, highlight the environment: Four in ten (43%) cited protecting the environment; 25%, reducing environmental waste; and 10%, that it was the right thing to do.

Those who rarely used any of the three recycling methods (curbside service, a central located recycling container, or recycling centers) were asked to explain, unaided, why this was true. These respondents, whose categorized answers are listed in the second column of Table 3, tended to cite four primary reasons:

## Synopsis of Results (cont.)

- **Inconvenience:** Two in ten (18%) directly cited the inconvenience of recycling; 10%, that recycling centers are too far away; and 10%, that the curbside recycling service was not available.
- **Lack of need:** Thirteen percent (13%) said they had no need for recycling.
- **Lack of familiarity:** One in ten (11%) cited their lack of familiarity with recycling options.
- **Lack of motivation:** Seven percent (7%) said household members were simply not motivated enough to recycle, and 4%, that they were too busy.

**Table 3**  
**Motivations for Level of Household Recycling Frequency**

<u>Most Frequently Cited Reasons . . .</u>	
<b>For More Frequent Recycling</b> <i>(n=407)</i>	<b>For Less Frequent Recycling</b> <i>(n=113)</i>
Protect the environment: 43%	Recycling is not convenient: 18%
Reduce waste: 25%	Don't have many items to recycle: 13%
It is the right thing to do: 10%	Unfamiliar with recycling options: 11%
Recycling is convenient: 9%	Recycling centers are too far away: 10%
Reduce need for landfills: 8%	Do not have curbside or central recycling: 10%
Save money on refuse fees: 7%	Not motivated or too lazy: 7%
Materials can be reused: 5%	Too busy to recycle: 4%
Saves natural resources: 4%	Cannot afford service fees: 3%
Earn money by recycling: 2%	Recycle bin takes time to fill: 3%
	Do not see a need to use services: 3%
	No space available for recycling bin: 2%

*Responses cited by 2% or more are listed.*

- **Perception about the relative effectiveness of the area's recycling programs:** Twenty-eight percent (28%) rated the relative effectiveness of the area's recycling programs as either "much better" (12%) or "slightly better" (16%) than expected. That was slightly (and statistically) better than the 21% rating them worse than expected. Among the rest, 45% said the programs were "about as expected," and 7% had no opinion.

## Synopsis of Results (cont.)

- **Overall satisfaction with available recycling options:** Four in ten (41%) said they were “very satisfied” with their recycling options, while 39% were “moderately” so. Eighteen percent (18%) reported being “not very” or “not at all” satisfied. (The rest were not sure.)

Those rating themselves “very familiar” with their recycling options were 2.7 times more likely than those not very familiar with them to respond with “very satisfied.” Frequent recyclers were 2.5 times more likely than others to do the same. Those with curbside recycling service were twice as likely to do so. Older respondents (more likely to have curbside service) and those in North Spokane County (also more likely to have it) were also significantly more likely than their opposites to report a favorable satisfaction rating.

Those reporting higher satisfaction were more likely to favorably rate the relative effectiveness of the area’s recycling programs.

Respondents were asked to explain, unaided, the primary reason(s) for their satisfaction rating. Table 4 lists the responses for those “very,” “moderately,” and “not very” or “not at all” satisfied with their recycling options. (The “+” indicates a favorable comment, while the “-” indicates the reverse.)

As Table 4 indicates, those “very satisfied” with their recycling options were most likely to cite these reasons:

- **Access to curbside service:** One-quarter (23%) explained that they receive curbside recycling service and 15%, that curbside service allows their household easy recycling.
- **Convenience:** Sixteen percent (16%) said their recycling options make recycling convenient, while one in ten (11%) mentioned the convenience of recycling centers.
- **Satisfaction with service effectiveness:** Twelve percent (12%) noted satisfaction with the service being received.
- **Range of items to recycle:** Eleven percent (11%) explained they were happy with the range of items they could recycle. (The limitation on the range of items to recycle, however, was a major complaint among those not “very satisfied,” as shown in Table 4.)

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

**Table 4**  
**Reasons Given to Explain Household Satisfaction with Recycling Options**

Those “Very Satisfied” (n=212)	Most Frequently Cited Reasons Among . . . Those “Moderately Satisfied” (n=204)	Those “Not Very” or “Not at All” Satisfied (n=92)
Have curbside service (+): 23% Recycling is convenient (+): 16% Service allows household to recycle (+): 15% Does a good job; satisfied with service (+): 12% Can recycle a variety of items (+): 11% Recycling center is convenient (+): 11% Recycling reduces waste (+): 5% Cannot recycle a wider range of items (-): 3%	Cannot recycle a wider range of items (-): 39% Not well-informed about recycling options (-): 8% Does a good job or satisfied with service (+): 6% Recycling has many restrictions (-): 6% Do not have curbside or central recycling (-): 5% Recycling center is too far away (-): 5% Have curbside service (+): 4% Service allows household to recycle (+): 4% Recycling is inconvenient (-): 3% Need additional bins to separate items (-): 2% Have to pay fee to recycle (-): 2% Service has room for improvement (-): 2% Recycling center is convenient (+): 2% Bins are too small (-): 2%	Do not have curbside or central recycling (-): 38% Cannot recycle a wider range of items (-): 16% Recycling center is too far away (-): 11% Not well-informed about recycling options (-): 10% Have to pay fee to recycle (-): 8% Do not recycle often or not at all (-): 5% Recycling is inconvenient (-): 4% Need additional bins to separate items (-): 3% Service has room for improvement (-): 3% Do not get reimbursed for recycling (-): 2%

*Responses cited by 2% or more are listed.*

Most of those “moderately satisfied” with their recycling options tried to explain, unaided, why they were not “very satisfied.” Their dominant complaint (cited by almost half; see the first- and fourth-ranked responses in Table 4’s second column) was about limitations on what could or could not be recycled. Some noted their lack of familiarity with recycling options, their ineligibility to receive curbside service, and the seeming inaccessibility of recycling centers.

Among the 92 respondents who were “not very” or “not at all satisfied,” 38% complained about the lack of curbside recycling service, while 16% cited limitations on the range of items that could be recycled. About one in ten noted that recycling centers were too far away (11%) or that they felt ill-informed about their options (10%).

- **Perceptions about household recycling:** Respondents were asked to rate their degree of agreement or disagreement with each of the eight statements listed in Table 5. Three of the statements were positively worded (that is, favorable to recycling) and the rest negatively worded. For each statement, Table 5 lists its overall rating average and the percentages agreeing and disagreeing with it.

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

**Table 5**  
**Reactions to Eight Statements About Household Recycling**

Test Statement	Average Rating (n=520, excluding “don’t know’s”)	Percentage . . .	
		Agreeing “Strongly” or “Mildly” (n=520)	Disagreeing “Strongly” or “Mildly” (n=520)
<i>Positively worded statements (favoring recycling)</i>			
Recycling is important to protect the environment.	4.78	96%	2%
For my household, recycling is the right thing to do.	4.71	93%	2%
I’m willing to pay extra to make recycling more convenient for my household.	2.73	38%	48%
<i>Negatively worded statements (not favoring recycling)</i>			
I need more information about recycling options available to my household.	2.89	41%	47%
Recycling programs have too many rules for what you can or can’t do.	2.76	34%	50%
Recycling tends to be inconvenient.	2.30	29%	64%
I’m only willing to recycle if it saves me money.	2.06	19%	73%
The funding devoted to recycling could be better used elsewhere.	2.05	14%	65%

Statements are rank-ordered by average within each group. Ratings were on a five-point scale, with “5” as “strongly agree” and “1” as “strongly disagree.” A difference of 0.08 of a rating point between averages (within each group) can be considered meaningful.

- **Positively worded statements:** Almost all agreed (including over eight in ten “strongly”) that recycling is important to protect the environment and is the right thing to do. The idea of paying extra to make recycling more convenient received a mixed response: 48% disagreed (including 32% who did so “strongly”), while 38% agreed (including 17% “strongly”).
- **Negatively worded statements:** Four in ten (41%) agreed that they need more information (while 47% disagreed). One-third (34%) agreed that recycling programs have too many rules (while 50% disagreed). The other three negatively worded statements were not very convincing to respondents: 29% agreed that recycling tends to be inconvenient; 19%, that one recycles only to save money; and 14%, that funds could be better used elsewhere.

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

The high levels of disagreement for the three lowest-ranked statements in Table 5 indicates that, if the statements are reversed – that is, funding devoted to recycling could *not* be better used elsewhere, recycling is *not* just about saving money, and recycling *doesn't* tend to be inconvenient – they would be at least moderately persuasive (but clearly not as persuasive as the top-ranked statements listed in the table).

These others results were also observed:

- Younger respondents (less likely to frequently recycle) were significantly more likely than older ones to agree with these statements:
  - I'm only willing to recycle if it saves me money.
  - I need more information about recycling options available to my household.
- Infrequent recyclers were statistically more likely than others to agree with these:
  - Recycling programs have too many rules for what you can or can't do.
  - I'm only willing to recycle if it saves me money.
  - The funding devoted to recycling could be better used elsewhere.
- A third (33%) of apartment or larger condominium dwellers said they “strongly agree” with “I'm willing to pay extra to make recycling more convenient for my household,” versus 15% for others. The more affluent were also significantly more willing to pay extra.

(Other background differences are examined in detail in *Graphic Summary* Section Addendum Figures 35 to 42.)

- **Overall enthusiasm by category for household recycling:** Each respondent's set of ratings for the statements listed in Table 5 (with codes for negatively worded statements reversed) were averaged to provide each individual with an overall “enthusiasm for recycling” score. The more affluent, those with curbside service, more frequent recyclers, and those knowing more about their recycling options produced the highest scores. Other differences were not significant. The absence of an age trend suggests that lack of enthusiasm is not the reason why younger adults participate less in recycling activities. The survey's results suggest, instead, the lack of accessibility to recycling options, a lack of familiarity with them, and/or an absence of motivation to use them.
- **Aided awareness of the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System's hotline:** Among all respondents, 31% said they were previously aware of the SRSWS's hotline. Among those receiving curbside recycling service, 36% were aware of it, versus 22% for those without service access. Thirty-five percent (35%) of those aged 35 and older were aware of it, versus 21% for younger respondents. In North Spokane County, 33% were aware of it, versus 21% elsewhere.

Detailed findings and additional results can be found in *Graphic Summary Section Two* (“*General Perceptions About Recycling*”). Verbatim responses

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

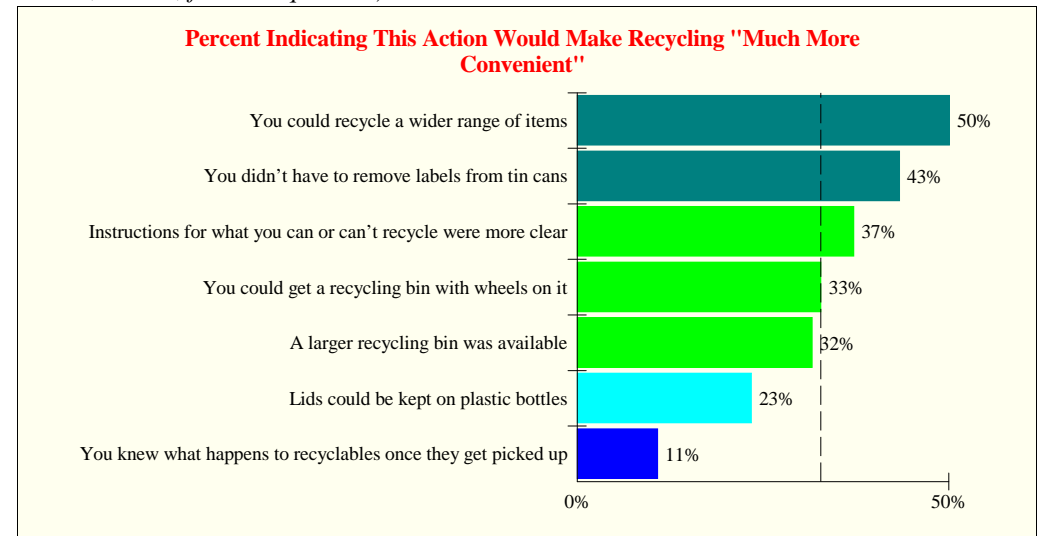
to unaided questions Q12 (reasons why the household finds it desirable to recycle), Q13 (reasons why the household does not recycle as often as it could), and Q16 (reasons to explain the satisfaction rating) are listed in this volume's appendix.

## ● Perceptions about curbside recycling service (Figures 45 through 52 in *Graphic Summary Section Three*)

- **Factors making curbside service more convenient:** The 341 respondents with curbside recycling service were asked to rate (using a three-point scale) the degree to which each of the seven actions listed in Figure 1-S would make the service more convenient. Figure 1-S displays the percentages indicating the actions listed would make it “much more convenient.” (The bars are color-coded to indicate degrees of distance above or below the average bar length [the dashed line].) This was observed:

- **Actions with the most impact (turquoise):**  
Among the seven actions measured, respondents said allowing a wider range of recyclable items and not requiring removal of tin can labels would have the greatest effect.
- **Actions with average relative impact (green):**  
Between 32% and 37% said these actions – providing clearer instructions, providing a wheeled recycling bin, and providing a larger bin – would make the service “much more convenient.”
- **Actions with below-average relative impact (blues):**  
These actions produced significantly less enthusiasm than the others. One in four (23%) said allowing lids on plastic bottles would be “much more convenient,” while only 11% said the same for explaining what happens to recyclables after pickup.

**Figure 1-S: Actions to Make Curbside Service More Convenient** (*Those receiving curbside service, n=341, for each question*)



Among frequent recyclers, 54% said allowing a wider range of items to recycle would make the service “much more convenient,” while only 29% of less frequent users claimed the same. This suggests that actually implementing this change would tend to have a greater effect on more frequent recyclers than on less frequent ones (not necessarily a bad outcome, since more frequent recyclers outnumbered their opposites in this survey.)

## Synopsis of Results (cont.)

- **Willingness to pay more to recycle currently non-allowable items:** Respondents were asked whether they were willing to pay “slightly more” per month to recycle any of the items listed in Figure 2-S. For each item, Figure 2-S lists the percentage that said “yes.” (Bars are color-coded to indicate distance above or below the average bar length [the dashed line].)

As Figure 2-S indicates, service users were most willing to pay extra to recycle all types of plastics, and moderately interested in paying to recycle junk mail and cereal boxes. Other test items produced less enthusiasm.

Frequent recyclers were significantly more willing than others to pay more to process plastics, junk mail, cereal boxes, and computer paper.

- **An additional fee to pay to recycle a wider range of materials:** Among curbside recycling service recipients, 28% said they would pay \$7 more to recycle a wider array of items. Four in ten (41%) found \$5 extra to be acceptable, while majorities were willing to pay either \$3 (61%) or \$1 (75%) extra.

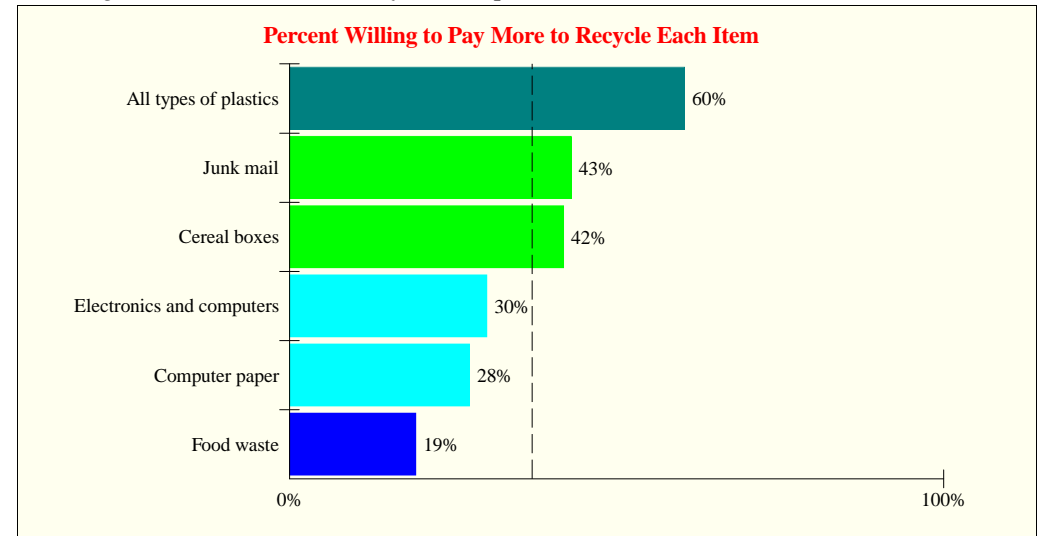
These results suggest that an add-on fee of between \$1 and \$3 would be acceptable to most households receiving curbside service.

- **Factors to motivate use of curbside recycling:** The 341 receiving curbside service were asked to describe, unaided, what would motivate household members to increase their use of it. The most often cited recommendation (by 13%) was to expand the range of items allowed to be recycled.

These responses (categorized and rank-ordered) were mentioned by at least 2%:

- Allow a wider range of items: 13%
- Nothing: 12%
- Clearer recycling instructions: 6%
- Get reimbursed for recycling: 6%

**Figure 2-S: Willingness to Pay More to Recycle Currently Non-Allowable Items** (Those receiving curbside service, n=341, for each question)



# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

- Bigger recycling bins: 4%
- Having bins with wheels: 3%
- Lower or no service fees: 3%
- Not having to remove labels from cans: 2%
- Good as is: 2%

Frequent curbside recyclers were more likely than infrequent ones to recommend allowing a wider range of items. Conversely, infrequent recyclers were more likely to want reimbursement – 23% of infrequent recyclers suggested it, versus 3% for frequent ones – suggesting personal motivation is an issue for some who don't often use curbside service.

Detailed findings and additional results can be found in *Graphic Summary Section Three (“Perceptions About Curbside Recycling Service”)*. Verbatim responses to unaided question Q21 (factors to motivate use of curbside recycling) are listed in this volume's appendix.

## ● **Interest in curbside recycling service for those not currently receiving it** (*Figures 53 through 55 in Graphic Summary Section Four*)

- **Willingness to pay for curbside recycling service:** Among 167 without curbside service, 18% said they would pay for curbside service. Another 23% were not sure. These significant variations were also observed:
  - **Location:** Respondents in the more rural areas of the county were about three times more likely than those in the more densely populated North to say they would pay for curbside service. (The percentages were 32% and 11%.) This was partially due to the greater likelihood of rural respondents lacking service access to be living in single family homes. (Even controlling for this and other factors, however, the variation in location was still significant.)
  - **Household income:** Twenty-seven percent (27%) of those with household income exceeding \$75,000 said they would pay to get the service, versus 17% for others.
- **The acceptable fee to pay to receive curbside recycling service:** Sixty-nine (69) respondents without curbside service but willing to pay for it (or not sure) were asked to consider an appropriate fee level for the service. A majority (54%) found \$7 per month to be acceptable; 75%, \$5; 87%, \$3; and almost all (97%), \$1.

Detailed findings and additional results can be found in *Graphic Summary Section Four (“Interest in Curbside Recycling Service for Those Not Currently Receiving It”)*.