

**CPA# 5861388**  
**2016 - 2018 Commercial Food Waste Grant**  
**Final Report (July 2018)**

<b>Grant Information</b>	
<i>Grantee:</i>	City of Auburn
<i>CPA Number:</i>	5861388
<i>Project Title:</i>	Commercial Food Waste Outreach Program
<i>Report prepared by (name):</i>	Kim Ducoté, Resource Stewards on behalf of the City of Auburn
<i>Date report prepared:</i>	July 9, 2018
<i>King County Solid Waste Division Grant Manager:</i>	Karen May

<b>Project Information</b>
<p><i>Provide an overall summary of the tasks and accomplishments of the project, based on project goals and objectives as outlined in the grant Scope of Work and Timeline. Capsulize information about the project that will allow county staff and potential interested businesses to learn key information about the project. Include the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the results and impacts of the project (including milestones achieved and results for other measurable deliverables)</i></li> <li>• <i>internal and external factors that contributed to or impeded the success of the project (what worked, what did not).</i></li> <li>• <i>an assessment of the potential for replicability and sustainability of the project by other commercial entities</i></li> <li>• <i>overall lessons learned.</i></li> <li>• <i>an assessment of the success of the Equity and Social Justice element of the project, if applicable</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Your grant manager will contact you if more information is needed.</i></p>

## Quantitative Assessment

### 2016 – 2018 Total Outreach Statistics:

- Project Contacts made since project inception: 626 (405 phone calls, 221 site visits)
- Businesses that signed up for new food scrap services during this project: 22
- Businesses still participating in the program at the end of this project: 18
- Program Outreach Letters mailed and/or emailed since project inception: 645 (Includes letters direct mailed: 541; Additional letters that were provided either hard copy and/or emailed during field outreach: 104)
- Businesses that signed up for the food scrap program but cancelled services before the end of the project: 4 properties, including 10 businesses (Couture Family Trust: Strip

Mall with 7 businesses, Store-Mor, Café del Cielo, 7-Eleven: 1602 A Street SE, Auburn WA)

- Services were cancelled because containers were frequently contaminated by staff or other businesses that shared these containers. Managers/Owners sited that it was too difficult to keep employees trained.
- Containers had to be serviced as garbage, which cost the businesses additional money, so the businesses determined it was not in their best interest to continue the program.

### **Final Site Visits:**

Final site visits were conducted in QTR 1 2018 at the 20 Waste Management businesses participating in food scrap program to assess how the program was performing and to determine if they needed additional assistance (staff training, educational materials, slim jims, etc.).

### **Performance of the 20 business by number and percentages:**

- **Excellent:** 10 businesses or 50%
- **Good Job:** 5 businesses or 25%
- **Needs improvement:** 3 businesses or 15%
- **No longer participating:** 2 businesses or 10%

### **Garbage – Tonnage Data:**

**Baseline Garbage Tonnage:** All container sizes (cans, carts, dumpsters, compactors) were converted to tons to determine the baseline data:

#### **Baseline / Cost**

2016 Per Month: 815 tons / \$133,903

2016 Per Quarter: 2,445 tons / \$401,709

**QTR 3 2016 – QTR 1 2018 - Garbage Tonnage:** All container sizes (cans, carts, dumpsters, compactors) were converted to tons.

#### **Total Garbage Collected**

2016-2018 Total to date: 14,217 tons

#### **Total Garbage Cost:**

2016-2018 Total to date: \$ 2,455,180

#### **Total Garbage Cost Savings Due to Container changes:**

2016-2018 Total to date: \$ (190,398)

## Food Waste Prevented & Diverted – Tonnage Data:

*NOTE: Container costs shown for Cedar Grove are calculated as Waste Management garbage rates less 20% (recommended by Cedar Grove), since we are not able to obtain Cedar Grove's rates.*

### **Total Food Waste Prevented** (food rescue, donation, etc.):

2016-2018 Total to date: 110.81 tons

### **Total Food Waste Diverted from Landfill** (into food scrap hauler collection programs):

2016-2018 Total to date: \* 9,155.78 tons (or 39.17% of the total MSW & YW stream)

\*Includes large food scrap roll-off tonnages that have a large impact on data.

## Qualitative Data

It is important to note, that no matter what size business, the majority of customers required a significant amount of time to “close the deal”. Setting up a new account required several repeat contacts, including: two (2) direct mail pieces, ongoing consultant contacts via phone calls, site visit cold-calls and even emails to actually make contact with a manager/owner and discuss the program. Emails sent and voicemails left were almost never returned.

A comment from outreach staff: *“During the 3+ months that I have been conducting calls and site visits, I have only once received a return phone call – just one. That was from a facilities manager to inform me that they have nothing to do with garbage and recycling for the strip mall I was inquiring about.”*

Once contact has been established, and the account is interested in the program, more contacts (site visits, calls, etc.) are required to set-up and train an account. When the new food scrap program started, additional time was required to check back in on their progress, answer questions and/or provide additional training.

- Restaurants in particular are busy, and times to contact them are limited. For example the outreach team cannot visit a restaurant between 11am-1:30pm since they are busy with a lunch rush, and not available, so timing is also important.

During all site visits outreach materials were available, including: introductory program information/letter, food scrap/recycling guidelines, rates sheets, decals, container locks, etc.

Recycling program information is always important, and appreciated by business management, because most businesses are NOT recycling correctly as noted below:

- Many only recycle cardboard.
- Recycling containers are frequently contaminated because of program confusion. Having educational materials available helps the customer and this contributes to long-term program successes.
- Recyclable items are frequently found in the garbage (aluminum and metal cans, cardboard/paper, plastic containers and glass bottles).

## Program Replicability:

Information gleaned that would assist with future program replicability is outlined below. It is an assessment of the approximate time required to setup, train and then monitor an account after program setup. The time requirements are approximations, but experience shows these to be fairly consistent:

- **Minimum 4 hours:** The minimum of 4 hours assumes everything flows very smoothly during each site visit, manager/owner is available and makes a timely decision, site visit timing is perfect, and location is not, or does not suddenly, get busy.
  - Initial contact and outreach: An account setup typically requires a minimum of 3 contacts and/or visits and can be a phone call, or cold-call site visit or if possible an email. The 4 hours assumes an owner or manager is on site, and/or available at time of visit/call to discuss the project, and has time for the outreach staff to explain the program and provide initial outreach materials.
  - Costs: During the first contact the outreach staff provides a basic cost analysis for the new food scrap service, and potential cost savings when downsizing the garbage container.
  - Training and Follow-up: After containers arrive at the customer's business, the outreach team returns and conducts training, provides recommendations for Best Management Practices, helps setup and label indoor containers, and place them in appropriate areas around the business.
  - Ongoing follow up and training as needed.
- **Minimum 5 hours:** Includes the above list, plus additional time because the manager is not readily available, or manager wants to check with someone else, or needs to "think about it", or does not return messages or emails and outreach team needs to stop by location again.
- **Extreme setup/management times 6 – 10+ hours:** Includes the above lists, plus additional time because this amount of time dedicated to an account assumes the account has told outreach they definitely want the program, but need time to coordinate everything. Or has setup the food scrap program and is having ongoing problems or contamination issues.

## Internal and external factors that contributed to or impeded the success of the project: (What worked, What did not).

### Data Collection, Tracking & Analysis:

Data collection, compilation and analysis was a large task and presented ongoing challenges and was time-consuming, reasons included:

- Identifying a consistent method of reporting that would work for all container sizes and all haulers was needed so "tons and tonnage" data were determined to be the most equitable. Then each container whether gallons or yards (carts, dumpsters, etc.) had to be converted to tons.
- Three (3) separate haulers had different sets of data (WM, CG and Republic).
- Each hauler had different rates, different "identifiers" for their container sizes, (WM has a 10 gallon, but Republic does not), etc.

- Data performance success was in part based on downsizing garbage containers. Most businesses did not want to downsize their garbage containers for a variety of reasons:
  - They want the garbage capacity should they need it.
  - Businesses do not want to pay for costly “extra” garbage charges.
  - Downsizing could affect their recycling costs. If a customer has more than 150% recycling capacity to garbage they must pay extra for recycling and they did not want to pay for anything extra. Almost all businesses have more recycling now than garbage.
- As the data grew quarterly the excel document became extremely large and the excel doc became slower and slower and more difficult to manage. This important input was provided from the person that managed the data:
  - *“The data for this project would be better served in a database application (like Access), not on an Excel spreadsheet.”*

#### **Program Start-up:**

- Program startup was initially delayed. Grant funding was available in QTR 3 2016 but processing of the City and County contract took longer than expected (approximately 30 days). Initial program outreach was to be completed by the end of QTR 4 2016. This was extremely difficult for both the city and consultant staff since no work could begin without funding. In the future consideration should be made to allow more time for contracts to make it through the system and more time for the program to unfold in a timely, professional manner and not rushed.

#### **Hauler/Service Provider issues and information:**

- Food Scrap Program hauler service costs were an issue:
  - Waste Management (WM) Rates - In Fall 2016 WM rates for 3 yard and 4 yard containers were affordable and provided incentive for the customer to setup a new program. However, in February 2017 WM rates were significantly increased and were more expensive than garbage rates. The new rates were not affordable, especially when additional program costs may come into play for example: labor, ongoing training, space for both indoor/outdoor collection containers, bio bags, etc.
    - However, of the Auburn/WM existing contract for commercial rates, containers up to 2 yards are affordable.
  - Cedar Grove (CG) Rates - CG yard/food rates were more affordable than the contracted hauler rate, but the outreach team was not able to get a rate sheet from Cedar Grove for customers. Each time they had a potential customer they needed to contact CG for rates. This was inefficient and time consuming.
- Hauler Data & Materials: Cedar Grove (CG) was not willing to provide “individual business customer” tonnage data or service days, since they consider the information proprietary. This initially impeded the ability to complete the baseline data, and continued to be an issue throughout the contract since data needed for the quarterly reporting was often slow in coming and was provided in “one lump sum” per container type which had to be deciphered for contract purposes. Outreach materials were also difficult to obtain for CG customers.

**Project Materials:**

The City budgeted \$3,980 for outreach promotional letters, sample compost bags, business compost tool kits, guidelines, and signage, but funding was only used for outreach letters and compost bag samples. The customers that started the compost program said they only wanted the compost guidelines (and English was fine) and some compost bags. They did not want signage or any other materials – stating guidelines with pictures are sufficient. The funding allocated for materials was then diverted to consultant costs.

**Customer Issues and Information:**

- Contact with business decision makers was an ongoing problem throughout the project. It was very difficult to make contact with decision makers; repeated calls and/or emails were not returned and program information left behind during site visits was not followed up on.
- A non-mandatory program is difficult to implement for a variety of reasons:
  - The majority of customers require several repeat visits and/or follow up calls before the outreach team receives a definite yes or no.
  - Customers need to explain the program to local or regional management. That management needs to decide if the program is a good fit for their business, and if they can perform successfully at their location.
  - Customers have concerns about additional costs including ongoing staff training, labor, space needed for containers, ongoing program service costs and costs for supplies (bags, containers), and does the program help or hinder their bottom line.

**Contamination:**

The lack of enforcement by business owners/managers and lack of compliance by employees regarding contamination required constant monitoring and follow up. Once a business was setup with food scrap collection the “monitoring contamination task” at some properties took a significant amount of follow up and site visits to “re-train staff”, etc. This equaled time away from contacting other accounts.

- At one account, a small strip mall with 7 businesses, we had repeat contamination in the food scrap bin by only one (1) of the businesses. We repeatedly called that business, conducted follow up site visits, provided additional training, and delivered new educational materials (which they always seemed to lose) to address contamination issues. The food scrap container at this location was serviced as garbage repeatedly. This account took many hours of initial and repeat training, support and site visits, but they were never able to comply. Finally, the property manager stopped the program because it was costing extra money to empty the food scrap bins as garbage.

**Illegal dumping:**

An ongoing concern for businesses is constant illegal dumping in all containers (garbage, recycling, yard/food) and/or in the enclosures or near the outdoor containers. WM container locks were provided for free which helped significantly. Our outreach team carried locks and made them available when illegal dumping issues were identified.

**Garbage/Recycling Enclosures:**

Businesses that have enclosures, rarely have room for additional containers and often do not have the room for a food scrap bin in the enclosure. The property managers rarely allow any containers to be placed outside of enclosures.

**Program Costs:**

Several times during initial contacts decision makers seem interested in the food scrap program, but even the slightest mention of the additional program cost would immediately derail the conversation. Even though the outreach team make it very clear that food scrap services, in many cases, were a fraction of the cost of garbage.

Some decision makers only see the additional work for their staff, ongoing staff training/labor, additional space for containers (both inside and outside) and the need to purchase bio-bags long-term. All of these items cost the business money. Even though bio-bags are optional, owners/managers want the easy setup, clean up and less staff work bio-bags would afford, so they like the idea of bio-bags, but not the additional cost. Decision makers were also concerned about contamination, and the fear of having the extra expense of a contaminated food scrap container being emptied as garbage. These concerns were another reason for the business owners/managers to say “no”.

**Pest infestations:**

This has been used as an excuse for not doing a food waste program. Even though we know, and share the fact, that food is already in the garbage. However, this continues to be another perceived problem that this program may cause the business.

**Property Managers, Corporate Entities and Strip Malls:**

Corporate entities, locations with property managers and strip malls were challenging.

Corporate entities (chain businesses) typically have non-local district managers (DM) or regional managers (RM) that make the decisions about waste containers. Many times these off site managers do not understand local programs. It takes a lot of outreach time to educate these managers, send them information and call to receive permission to visit a location. Once completed it was difficult to get back in touch with the decision maker, and the outreach team cannot think of one instance where a location was actually setup, despite the time spent on this task during outreach. Also a cold-call site visit directly to the store usually does not work, because the store refers the outreach team back to the DM/RMs.

Initial calls to property managers (PMs) were positive and the PM’s instructed the outreach team to contact the businesses individually. After site visits were completed, getting back in touch with property managers was difficult and often impossible. Anecdotally it seemed that once the PM realized the purpose of the original call, and that this was not a mandatory program, they did not return calls or emails. This may be because they only see the program as additional work, with concerns about ongoing contamination and the additional service costs. Below is an example of a comment we heard more than once:

- Qdoba Restaurants (Rebecca with Ecova): *“Our company will not participate until programs are mandatory. All regions/areas have different recycling and composting programs/regulations, making it very difficult to train staff and stay current.”*

- This customer has 800 locations (WA, OR, CA etc.). Also they said they will not do front of the house programs due to customer contamination, which their staff was required to deal with. The back of the house was difficult too, small spaces, no room for all the types of containers needed. She felt it was all too much to manage.

**Privately owned business:**

The outreach team had more success with smaller, privately owned businesses:

- It is easier to identify and make contact with a decision maker.
- Privately owned businesses often pay for and manage their own waste containers and are willing to make a decision that will help reduce their garbage volume and costs.
- Several small business owners expressed concerns about the environment and that they “want to do their part and do the right thing”.

**Preventing Food Waste (through donations):**

Businesses continued to express concern about \*donating food and being “held liable if someone gets sick”. This is despite the fact that we provided information about the “Good Samaritan Act” in the outreach letters and during our site visits. People also said they did not have the time/staff required to “deliver” to the Auburn Food Bank, etc. When we told them the Auburn Food Bank would pick up, they all seemed interested in this opportunity, but in final contacts with the Auburn Food Bank it doesn’t appear that anyone we spoke to “officially” signed up for collection services. The Auburn Food Bank did say they continue to receive donations from Auburn businesses, however they could not provide a definitive list of suppliers.

A discussion with the manager of an Auburn Starbucks store revealed that Starbucks Corporate began a new project called the Food Share Program. Starbucks’ goal is to donate all food/pastry by 2020. For more information on this project visit this Starbucks website link: <https://news.starbucks.com/news/starbucks-food-donation-program>

The Starbucks Food Share Program is just beginning to roll out in the Seattle, WA area according to Katie from the Auburn Starbucks (Sept 2017). It will be expanding to other stores in King County in the future. This program is for packaged foods only (pastries, boxed sandwiches), since they do not currently have a method for donating cold food. They are working on the cold food donations as a future possibility. Here is info on the local Washington State program rollout: <https://news.starbucks.com/news/starbucks-foodshare-program-comes-home-to-seattle>.

\*This is a regional and national issue, the need for additional and ongoing education about food donations, The Good Samaritan Act, and other programs available region wide, would be beneficial for business.

**Additional Prevented Food Program notes:**

Some good news is that businesses are aware that compostable items are a resource! Some businesses that produce a lot of food waste are actively seeking alternatives to disposal, especially free alternatives. Examples include coffee grounds from coffee shops to gardeners, and old produce given to pig farmers from grocers. However, based on feedback from



businesses these alternative programs are spotty because of service and collection inconsistencies and lack of communication with all staff members.

- One coffee location manager said they gave away their coffee grounds to gardeners, and don't throw them away. However, looking in their garbage this was not always the case because the garbage had coffee grounds in it.
- We heard a lot about a local "pig farmer" who picks up food waste for his pigs. However, an update from one business said this program was suspended at their location because of behavioral issues of this individual toward the store's employees.
- This alternative disposal solution may have potential for growth regionally with education and outreach and information available via the web.

## **Assessment of the success of the Equity and Social Justice element of the project**

**Outreach/education:** Each location visited was asked if educational materials in other languages would be helpful. Customers repeatedly said they were happy with the current materials provided by the haulers. They liked the pictures, the simplicity, and they wanted to use what "everyone else" was using. Consistency and simplicity continue to be the driving factor here.

Spanish language materials were frequently requested and was the only request the outreach team had for educational materials in other languages. These materials were available and provided to these customers.

Locations that do not have a staff person that speaks English as a first language must be visited in person. It is difficult to discuss program details over the phone due to language barriers. Once onsite, every location visited did have someone that was able to communicate the program information to the manager. This requires significantly more outreach time.

Our site visits/cold calls are often brief encounters because staff/management is busy, so it is difficult to ask about specific languages spoken without seeming culturally insensitive or "politically incorrect". At some locations an employee/interpreter will indicate that the owner/manager (decision maker) does not speak English. We provide information to the interpreter who tell us they will pass the information on to the owner/manager. The interpreters may even seem interested in the FS program, but that does not indicate that the owner will embrace the idea, or that the one translating the information will be effective in doing so. What we have also noticed is that sometimes the interpreter will say that the owner is not on site, but we subsequently find out that the owner is there often listening to our conversations. Anecdotally we think this is done so they do not have to speak to us and perhaps use the language barrier as an avoidance strategy.

Please note that several of the accounts the outreach team set up had language barriers. However, the owners of these locations were open to speaking with the outreach team and quickly would have their "staff interpreter" get involved if needed. One possible future solution would be to have an outreach team that speaks more than one language. We have

received some feedback that Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Malaysian and perhaps even Korean and Japanese interpreter services may be beneficial.

## Lessons Learned

- **Program account set-up:** The struggles encountered by the outreach team trying to set up food scrap programs were reminiscent of similar difficulties encountered during the early days trying to setup “regular recycling”. In the 1990’s and early 2000’s businesses did NOT (and still do not) want to pay for recycling services, despite the fact that the garbage volume would be reduced and save them money. Owners/managers could not wrap their heads around the issue. They were worried about additional work for their staff, they didn’t know where they would put extra indoor/outdoor containers, and they were concerned about contaminated recycling bins being serviced as garbage, costing them money. The outreach team encountered very similar concerns trying to set up the food scrap program.
  - The consultant thinks this is a much bigger issue that needs to be addressed on a regional level.
- **Uninformed or indifferent decision makers:** One issue we have noticed is that many business decision makers are either indifferent or perhaps uninformed about the importance of environmental stewardship. It appears that some decision makers are focused primarily on the revenue generation and trying to keep their doors open for business. Sometimes the staff might show interest, but that doesn’t translate to the owner who is more concerned about production and bottom line profitability, and are not willing to invest any potential time or money into an additional project.
  - This is an ongoing educational challenge as well as a lack of awareness of our connection to the environment that seems to be missing for some decision makers.
  - The consultant believes this to be a much bigger issue that needs to be addressed on a regional level.
  - Outreach indicated that businesses signing up for food scrap services prefer to wait to reduce their garbage volume. First the outreach team doesn’t think that businesses really “believe” they will be able to reduce their garbage volume significantly enough to downsize their garbage. They also do not want to call for an additional garbage pickup if they run out of room in the garbage dumpster because extra pickups are considered a significant cost for them to bear.
- **Smaller businesses:** We had more success with smaller businesses that paid for their own solid waste services. They had smaller, staffs to manage and train. These businesses could benefit directly from the cost savings if the program was successful. .
- **Ongoing visits:** Initial contacts to reach a decision maker take a significant amount of time and ongoing site visits are required to get a commitment. All accounts required ongoing training and site visits. Every time the outreach team conducted a site visit staff always had questions about the program. There is ongoing confusion between recycling, food/yard programs, compostable items. Ongoing outreach, training and educational materials are needed for long-term program success. This was not only

evident with the newly implemented food scrap programs but with the recycling programs which have been in place for many years.

- One training tip that was very successful and significantly helped reduce contamination was using the old phrase “*When in doubt, throw it out!*” That seemed to give the participant permission to throw the item away. Otherwise they seemed to feel “guilty” and threw it in the food scrap or recycling bin anyway because they wanted to “do the right thing”. It must be reiterated and emphasized that businesses and employees are very busy. They do not have the time to “figure it out” while they have a line of customers waiting for assistance.

## Final Recommendations

### **Imbedded rates:**

Consider imbedding food scrap program costs into solid waste fees or use a similar tactic. All businesses could benefit from this, even an office creates some form of food waste (lunchrooms, catered events). Provide businesses with up to 2- 96 gallon carts for food scrap collection programs for no additional charge, with imbedded fees. This would encourage more participation because the service would be available to everyone and it would improve a large barrier to program success and cost.

Citing similar two programs:

- Two (2) “free” recycling carts for businesses has been done very successfully in Seattle with regular recycling. More info under Commercial Customers at this link:  
<http://www.seattle.gov/util/ForBusinesses/SolidWaste/RecyclingBusinesses/index.htm>.
- Two (2) food scrap carts is exactly what the City of Kirkland WA made available to their business community and they have found the program to be successful, here is the link:  
[http://www.kirklandwa.gov/depart/Public\\_Works/solidwaste/Business/Compost.htm?](http://www.kirklandwa.gov/depart/Public_Works/solidwaste/Business/Compost.htm?)

The City of Kirkland, Washington does have strict program participation parameters, which would be highly recommended for other’s seeking to implement successful food scrap programs, those include:

- Have a recycling rate of at least 50%
- Arrange a walkthrough of the business with City representative
- Have at least 25% of employees interested in participating
- Have at least two employees willing to be the contact for the Composting program, conduct employee outreach and education, and check for contamination

### **Consultant recommendations for a similar “no additional fee” program:**

1. **Provide up to 2-food scrap carts for businesses at no additional charge.** This would be adequate service for many businesses. Requiring these accounts to:
  - a. Sign a pledge that they will “compost correctly”

- b. At all times a minimum of 2 people on site will be thoroughly trained in the compost program and these trained people will be in charge of both overseeing the ongoing management of the containers and training new staff on the program to insure compliance.
  - c. These businesses should be followed up with annually or at a minimum every-other-year to see if they are in compliance. This could be done with a follow up site visit, a letter or email, and/or require the hauler to report on these business's containers annually, or every other year.
2. **Equity and Social Justice:** Although businesses did tell us they liked the consistency and simplicity of the hauler provided food scrap guidelines provided, this program would benefit from outreach interpreters to work directly with accounts. Research would need to be conducted to determine exactly what languages would be needed, but Spanish, Asian and perhaps Eastern European interpreters may be of great benefit to long-term program success and to overcome any cultural barriers.
3. **Focus on smaller, privately owned businesses.** We had more success with smaller businesses that paid for their own solid waste services. They had a smaller staff to manage and train. In addition, these businesses could benefit directly from the cost savings if the program was successful.

### **Other recommendations:**

**Separate program outreach and data collection by container type:** For example, promote food waste collection to those businesses who have front-load garbage containers only ) or to accounts that have carts only (not combined with accounts who have cart, container or roll-off services). The data tracking for garbage and food waste tonnages and their conversion to tons, and cost savings analysis is much less complex when you focus on one type of container.

*Provide any other information that the grant manager should know about this project.*

## **Final Conclusion**

**Anticipated Program Results:** The anticipated results for this project were considered favorable prior to the actual implementation of the project due to the following factors:

- The 2009 Auburn Commercial (business) Food Waste Collection program implemented by the City was successful, especially since food waste collection was relatively new and the City was able to conduct site visits with the compost hauler/processor Cedar Grove (CG).
- In the last seven years, food waste reduction and collection outreach had increased significantly to King County cities, therefore indicating an increased possibility of business awareness and participation.
- The partnership opportunities available with Cedar Grove and Waste Management to enhance already existing food waste collection programs in Auburn and to add new businesses was promising.

Unfortunately, the results after implementation were not as expected:

- Businesses were not as interested in starting any new programs that cost additional money.
- Although there was a lot of outreach around food waste collection, most businesses seemed to be too busy to read and research the program availability or options – indicating a lot of the outreach materials may not be read and is just discarded.
- It was difficult to obtain information and staff support from Cedar Grove to enhance and/or start new programs for those that could have benefited from their program container sizes.

**Future Food Waste Collection Programs:** If King County seeks to allocate additional funding to outreach programs aimed at diverting more food waste from the garbage, they may need to consider providing the funding to those cities that have a mandatory food scrap collection program and/or a ban of food waste in the landfill (similar to the ban on yard waste).

**Contacting Owners/Managers:** It should also be noted that many Auburn businesses are either corporate entities which make it hard to reach decision makers or small businesses that may be financially conservative. This program may be more sustainable in a city that has larger privately owned businesses with deeper pockets. That said, the fact that Kirkland provides 2-food scrap carts for free and Seattle had to provide 2-recycling carts free to increase program participation has the consultants concluding that this program may need to be provided at no charge, similar to how recycling programs got a foothold or a mandatory program to get better participation and program success.

**END**