

Report

Community Meetings and Stakeholder Discussions March 1-6, 2009

This report summarizes the findings of three community meetings and seven stakeholder discussions held in Guam, March 1-6, 2009. These meetings were conducted to obtain input from small groups of Guam residents and a select number of Mayors, environmentalists, school officials, business representatives and media regarding GBB's plans for implementing a new, cart-based collection system for customers of the Solid Waste Management Division (SWMD). In addition, several of the meetings laid the groundwork for future collaboration with businesses, the schools and media in order to promote recycling and the new collection system.

Community Meetings

GBB, with assistance from the SWMD, organized three community meetings with small groups of Guam residents in the south, central and northern village districts. The Mayors of each of Guam's 19 villages were asked to select one male and one female resident, both SWMD customers and non-customers, to attend the meetings. The following is an overview of the three groups:

Group #1: Southern Villages, Tuesday, March 3, 6-8 pm

6 residents of Umatac Village, including Mayor Dean Sanchez

1 resident of Agat Village

3 residents of Merizo Village

3 females, 7 males; meeting was held at the Umatac Community Center

Two of the participants are current SWMD customers; 8 others self-haul their trash to the Ordot Dump.

Group #2: Northern Villages, Wednesday, March 4, 6-8 pm

4 residents of Tamuning-Tumon-Harmon Village, including Mayor Francisco C. Blas

3 residents of Chalan Pago-Ordot Village, including Mayor Jessy Gogue

3 residents of Mangilao Village, including Vice Mayor Allan G. Ungacta

1 resident of Barrigada Village: Vice Mayor June U. Blas

4 females, 7 males; meeting was held at the Tamuning Community Center

The majority of participants are current SWMD customers.

Group #3: Central Villages, Thursday, March 5, 6-8 pm

2 residents of Piti Nimitz Hill Village

4 residents of Hagatna Heights

4 females, 2 males; meeting was held at the Hagatna Heights Community Center

All participants are current SWMD customers.

Purpose: The meetings were designed to better understand residents' attitudes and opinions about current collection services, the registration process for trash collection service, the trash cart, public education materials, and outreach methods, including:

- Opinions about current solid waste services, including level of satisfaction
- Participation in recycling/general opinions about recycling
- General opinions about elements of the new trash collection system
- Opinions about the registration process
- Opinions about the draft brochure, cart hanger and other public education planned for the cart rollout campaign
- Suggestions for best ways to communicate with residents
- Questions about program and service improvements

At each meeting, participants viewed a short slide presentation that described the trash cart roll out plan, completed two worksheets designed to obtain their opinions on various elements of the new system, and engaged in a group discussion led by a GBB representative. They also had a chance to view a trash cart, similar to the one the SWMD will distribute to customers.

Statement of Limitations:

The discussions that took place in these small groups were exploratory and qualitative in nature. They sought to develop insight and direction, rather than obtain quantitatively precise measures that can be projected to all Guam residents. The discussions provide GBB and the SWMD with unfiltered, candid comments from a segment of current and potential customers, giving valuable insights into residents’ beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors.

Findings and Verbatim Comments:

The following comments and representative quotes (edited) emerged during the discussion and in the worksheets residents completed during the sessions. (Note: The group number for each comment is listed in parentheses after the comment.)

Trash collection and recycling

To begin each meeting, we first explored residents’ attitudes about current trash collection and recycling services.

Residents were divided in their level of satisfaction with current **trash collection services**. While some pointed to inconsistent collection services as well as lids and trash cans thrown to the side of the road after collection, others reported that trash is collected consistently early in the morning and customer service at the SWMD is responsive when problems are reported.

Sometimes they pick up the trash and sometimes they don't...Sometimes the [trash can] cover is missing or destroyed. (#1)

Collection is always precise unless there is a problem. When there is a problem, we contact Solid Waste and they handle it right away. They [trash collectors] do put containers back, unlike the past. (#2)

Customers have to put trash out on Thursday nights [because the collection takes place early the next morning]. If the trash [can] is knocked over by dogs, crews don't collect it. The cans get cracked because the crews throw them down. (#3)

When it comes to **recycling**, residents said they want to recycle and recognized that recycling is a way to extend the life of the Ordot Dump. However, they spoke at length about a number of barriers to recycling participation. They consider the drop-off transfer stations/convenience centers to be inconvenient—too far away and closed on Sundays and Mondays when they are most likely to need to dispose of recyclables and trash. They said that some residents who do not have transportation find it impossible to take recyclables to Agat, Dededo and the Ordot Dump. The current value of recyclables is also a deterrent, since residents don't think these materials are worth the time and effort to recycle. In addition, the convenience centers accept too few materials. Some group residents participate in the I-Recycle school program to recycle aluminum cans, but one resident complained of the need to empty the cans out of plastic bags at the school program. A representative from a Mayor's office said the onus is often on the Mayors to transport recyclable products to the schools and convenience centers. Several residents commented that they would like to have recycling bins at the Mayors' offices.

There are barriers. Centers are too far way; no transportation. (#1)

Permanent recycling containers would be good. I've seen this in the military and it works. (#1)

There are too few materials accepted for recycling (#2)

Recycling is not an organized effort. It's inconvenient. How can we do it effectively and make it convenient for customers? (#2)

It's a good idea to recycle, but we need to be educated. (#2)

Recycling is our [the Mayor's] problem. Not everyone has transportation to bring the products to the designated areas. Senior citizens can't do this. These are the problems. Some can handle it and some can't. There are no special rates and pick ups for senior citizens. Currently the Mayors are tasked to do this. (#2)

Are there plans to have recycling containers at the Mayors' offices? If so, it would discourage illegal dumping. (#2)

One pickup load of cans is worth only \$4.00 and is not worth the time. (#3)

There's no transportation to move materials to recycling bins. If we're paying for trash pick up, just give [us] a bin for recycling. (#3)

The hours of the transfer stations need to be extended to 7 am to 6 pm, seven days a week. [Residents agreed with this comment, saying that they use weekends to do household cleaning and that's the best time to go to the transfer stations.] (#3)

Recycling bins should be made easily available at each Mayor's [office]. (#3)

Please extend hours of operation for transfer station. (#3)

New services: trash cart

Residents commented that the new trash carts will be convenient for residents and trash collectors, reduce litter (can't be knocked over by animals) and represent a fresh start for the SWMD. The fact that the carts will be distributed "free" and have lids is appealing. However, residents expressed the fear that the carts might be stolen and that non-customers would use them. A few residents thought they would probably need more than one cart, while others thought the cart would be too big for their needs and suggested a smaller cart (with a reduced fee). Residents questioned whether they should line the carts with plastic bags as they do now with their trash cans, and why trash in the new cart needs to be bagged (we explained answers to these questions).

It's free and nice. (#1)

Some families might need 2-3 carts because they live together (families within families) (#1)

We will see more recycling. (#1)

It's neater and not likely to be knocked over by animals. (#2)

Not everyone needs a huge container. Some may need a medium size. (#2)

If everyone recycles, the big carts aren't needed. (#2)

More convenient for residents and SW collectors to haul. (#3)

It's a good size, perfect for me, but for some of my relatives, one cart wouldn't be enough. (#3)

It's sad to say but this culture accepts vandalism to some degree. Vandalism -- that's my concern... The carts also might not be used for trash, but for other purposes, such as collection of water. (#3)

It's a good container and one is enough if we recycle. But I'm not sure the carts will withstand the weather here. (#3)

Excess trash stickers

Residents thought the idea of the excess trash stickers is good and fair, but many felt that 2 free stickers per year will not be enough due to the number of parties and fiestas hosted by many families. They wanted to know what the cost of the additional stickers will be and suggested most families will need from 5 to 10 per year, or more. They wondered whether the sticker fee will be the same for any size trash bag, and they expressed the concern that there will be more littering when animals get into the excess trash bags. Several residents noted that the stickers will provide an incentive for residents to reduce their trash. However, if it's not convenient (or too expensive) to purchase the additional stickers, illegal dumping can be expected, they said.

It's good for big families and parties. (#1)

Most residents will need to learn to reduce trash. (#1)

What or how convenient will purchase of stickers be? (#2)

Trash left in bags might get destroyed by strays. (#2)

Two stickers is not enough per year. (#3)

On our island, excess trash is definitely occurring in each household. We need at least 5 stickers. (#3)

Collection ban

While residents generally accepted the reason for the ban on cardboard, vegetative waste and inert materials, they objected to the fact that there are few convenient disposal/recycling options for these materials. They fear that illegal dumping, already a problem in Guam, will increase with the ban.

If you provide a place for people to dump/recycle these products, you might get a more positive reception. (#1)

On our island, when you have to drive from Yigo village to Umatac village it's far. It's too far to take banned products, which leads to illegal dumping. (#1)

It protects the environment by reducing trash at the landfill. (#1)

People who don't have the means to remove or transport [these materials] will dump them on the side of the road. (#2)

Someone should come down to pick up [these materials]. (#2)

A new start. I have seen this done in the U.S. (#3)

Good practice for residents but it will take some time. (#3)

Recycling accessibility [is a problem] and convenience is not easily available. (#3)

Registration

Residents agreed that holding registration at the Village Mayors' offices will be convenient (much more convenient than the current registration process) and help the Mayors update their village listings. Those who have Internet access would like to be able to register online or at least to download the registration form. Group members who serve as staff in a Mayor's office wanted to ensure that they would not be tasked with registration without assistance from the SWMD. One group member suggested a door-to-door outreach effort would be effective in promoting registrations, with funding to the Mayors to enlist local residents to help with registration. Residents also suggested holding registration at shopping malls and sporting events. Some families might collaborate to register as one account, one resident said. When asked if they plan to register, based on what they learned during the presentation, residents in the northern and central villages said they were more likely to register than did those in the southern villages – but there was a certain hesitation expressed, primarily due to the fees

(discussed below). Residents thought the proposed registration form was easy to understand.

*It helps us from traveling too far from home. More update on residents. (#1)
We could have funding given to the Mayors to enlist people to help with the registration because they know the villagers and the areas. (#1)*

Solid Waste should get together with Guam Power Authority and Guam Telephone Authority on registrations for rural areas and narrow roads. (#2)

If actually as proposed, would be convenient for uses. (#2)

I like it! (#3)

Registration is convenient for people who work. (#3)

Registration online would be outstanding! (#3)

Bulky waste collection

Residents applauded the future bulky waste collection service as a deterrent to illegal dumping and as an added convenience for SWMD customers. Currently, some Mayors' offices have problems disposing of furniture, couches, beds and mattresses at the locations recommended by Guam EPA, and one said he has been turned away at the Ordot Dump. Residents expressed concerns that this new collection service might be difficult to deliver, given the past record of the SWMD.

Appliances die out. [Need to] upgrade. (#1)

Should help to improve the illegal dumping that occurs. (#2)

They say DPW will be the one to collect, but they have transportation issues also. So how could they be able to serve us? (#2)

Great idea! You're making it convenient for people. It's good for the handicapped, disabled and elderly. (#2)

As long as collectors come and get it! (#3)

Less work for the Mayor's office and hoping that constituents don't go out and do illegal dumping. (#3)

Household hazardous waste collection

Residents also applauded the future HHW collection services as a benefit to the community and the environment and for safety reasons. They said they would like to see the drop-off locations at the Mayor's offices for convenience reasons.

Good for the community and the environment. (#1)

Saves time...less illegal dumping. (#1)

If the company is offering the removal of these items for free, then it's great. (#2)

Acceptance of these materials should be in every village at no charge. (#2)

Good system if it includes car oil. (#2)

Drop off should be done at the Mayor's office. (#3)

As long as it is every day throughout the year. (#3)

Fees

The issue of collection fees (described during the presentation as likely to be \$30.43 per month for one cart) raised comments, questions and concerns. While some residents thought the fee was fair and a good, reasonable price, others thought it was too high, especially for elderly, disabled and low income residents. Some suggested a tiered fee structure, based on cart size or amount collected. Others said it would be cheaper to self-haul to the Ordot Dump. Residents questioned how the fee was calculated (we described what factors go into determining the fee).

\$30 is good because people will be more aware. The fee would make people think. Maybe in the future the rates could be reduced. (#1)

It's a little spike from the \$10 currently charge. (#1)

Fee may be too costly for those who can't afford it. (#2)

Appears to be reasonable, but lower consumption/usage rates should be considered. Tiered fee structure? (#2)

A little too expensive for a low income family. (#2)

There should be a discount for the elderly and disabled. (#2)

Everyone wants to go green, but overall the fees will make people reluctant. (#2)

Affordable rate. (#3)

The \$30.43 fee is quite expensive. But I understand the fee is 'set.' I don't think the price will go down. (#3)

Public education

During the slide presentation, residents learned about the Receiver's plans for a public education campaign, and they reviewed color copies of a proposed brochure and cart hanger. They also commented on a list of four campaign slogans and provided suggestions on preferred outreach methods.

General comments on the public education plan:

Education is definitely needed. (#1)

Make it simple. (#1)

You need to really educate the residents on what can be recycled. (#2)

The community needs to be made aware of health hazards [from trash]. (#2)

We need to involve people in self education. (#2)

Approach the senior citizens at senior centers by going there and asking them how they feel. (#2)

If there were a bottle bill on Guam, people would hunt for bottles for money and the island would be clean. We need effective and immediate behavior modification. (#2)

I think home visits to educate your customers [should be done]. (#3)

Not everyone will read information. (#3)

There's a need for more outreach, more meetings. (#3)

Brochure and cart hanger:

Residents said they found the brochure to be useful and that the photos and graphics helped explain the text. They noted that the brochure answered questions about where to dispose of banned materials, but several residents questioned why the brochure says trash must be bagged in the carts (we explained that it prevents litter and odors, and makes it easier for the collection crews to lift the bags if the hydraulic lifter does not work). One group member specifically recommended that a "human face" be included in the brochure to make it more relevant to Guam and appealing to residents. When asked whether there should be translated versions of the brochure, the southern group said an English version will suffice, while several members of the central and northern group recommended a Micronesian translation. One northern group member suggested including the most basic information in Chamorro.

As for the cart hanger, several members of the central group suggested it be placed on the door not the cart, because it would be more visible. But most residents agreed that a cart hanger would be a good reinforcement of the information. One group (central villages) would like to see a sticker on the cart with reminders about the banned materials.

Could you follow up with a TV ad repeating information that's in the brochures? (#1)

What if a vehicle is parked near the carts? In the brochure, it would be good to list 'Keep vehicles' away from carts. (#1)

There's no 'human interaction' in this brochure. I want to see pictures of people. (#2)

The information on the cart hanger needs to be a quick read: What? When? Where? It's information overload. (#2) But when asked what should be deleted, this resident said, It's all needed.

Place stickers on the carts with graphics of what's not allowed. Do it graphically. (#2)

There's a need for more outreach. Give the brochures out more than once. (#3)

Slogans:

Residents were asked to evaluate and comment on several slogans: Rolling out a clean, green Guam; Guam rolls out: Cleaner, greener; For a cleaner, greener Guam! GovGuam SWMD; and Guam: Cleaner, Greener.

The response to these slogans was lukewarm, with "Guam: Cleaner, Greener" the favorite among residents in the southern and central groups. The northern group preferred "Guam rolls out: Cleaner, greener." Residents suggested finding ways to get residents involved in the process (e.g., holding a school contest or a contest among seniors to come up with a catchy slogan with local appeal). The comment was made to reflect active partnerships in the slogan and in all other campaign materials.

Other slogan suggestions:

Fresh Start Guam

Making Guam Better

Pitch In Guam: Green is clean!

Website:

Few residents were aware of or had visited the Receiver website www.guamsolidwastereceiver.org, even though the majority of residents we spoke to have Internet access. One group member wanted to know more about GBB (we told residents full information is available on the website and that residents can sign up for email updates).

Registration Form

Residents found the draft registration form to be self-explanatory and thought it would be easy to complete. One group member questioned why a driver's license number is required on the form. Some resident would be interested in being able to complete the form online.

Outreach and Communication Strategies:

Residents suggested the following ways to reach out to the community, encouraging us to "be everywhere!":

- Involve children and the schools with incentives for children of free excess trash stickers, gift certificate, school supplies
- Involve seniors
- Go to sporting events
- Set up tables at the malls and "Pay Less" stores
- Promote through parish bulletins (perhaps with a countdown until registration)
- Advertise in newspapers (PDN, Marianas Variety insert)
- Develop radio ads
- Develop TV ads with local people
- Participate in talk shows (radio and TV)
- Promote in village newsletters, flyers

- Governor and celebrities should follow the collection trucks on the first day (i.e., a media event)
- Conduct outreach door to door

Residents' Questions

Residents were asked to list their most pressing questions about the current and new systems – many of which we will need to address during the rollout campaign:

- Why does trash in the carts need to be bagged?
- Will there be a weight restriction?
- Do the trash carts need to be lined with a trash bag?
- Who is responsible if the carts are damaged?
- How was the monthly collection fee calculated?
- Will there be discounts for seniors, disabled and low income (e.g., a lifeline rate)?
- Will there be a problem with the trucks and lifting the carts on smaller, narrow streets?
- Will future collection service be government-based?
- Do current customers have to register again?
- Will the disabled be able to register in their homes?
- Why is a driver's license number needed on the registration form?
- Where has this kind of system worked before? How has it worked in other communities?
- Who is GBB?
- Will Mayors still be able to take trash to Ordodt for free?
- Why are the Transfer Stations closed on Sundays?
- Can we still take our trash to the Transfer Stations and to the Ordodt Dump (e.g., self haul)?
- Who will police the carts?
- If the cart is partially filled, will the charge/fee be the same?
- How many filled trash bags will fit into the cart?
- Can we use any size bag with the excess trash sticker?
- Will excess trash be picked up?
- What level of detail will the RFID tag provide?
- Why can't the fee be \$10 like the current rate?
- Will there be a change in the number of personnel on the collection truck? What happens to the personnel who are no longer on the truck? What is the target date for implementing the new system?
- What will happen to the existing trucks?

Stakeholder Discussions

The GBB representative held the following meetings:

1. Environmental Community

Peggy Denny, I-Recycle (2 meetings)
Paul Tobiason, Recycling Association of Guam
Berrie Straatman, RAG
John Dierking, RAG
Barbara Dumdca, RAG

2. Printers

Janice Flores, Graphic Center, Inc.
Romy Adca, American Printing
Jun Distor, Victoria Printing and Graphics, dba island Banners and Signs

3. Melissa Savares, Mayor of Dededo Village

4. Agnes Perez, Operations Manager, Home Depot Patty Lintiaco, Contract Services Supervisor, Home Depot

5. Betty Ann Guerrero, Station Coordinator, KUAM TV (phone meeting)

6. Stephen C. Ruder, Ruder Integrated Marketing Strategies

7. Sylvia Calvo, School Program Consultant, Guam Public School System

The following are discussion highlights, including plans for collaboration:

- Messaging:
 - “Guam Cleaner and Greener” is a good message that should have broad appeal and works in concert with the re-branding “I am Guam” campaign, currently underway.
 - Emphasize the need to shrink trash/save space at Ordot in all public ed materials.
 - Gardening is a popular activity in Guam; emphasize composting, grasscycling and how to recycle organic materials, including vegetative waste.
 - The fact that recycling is “sanitary” should be emphasized.
 - Emphasize that the new cart system is easy, convenient. People respond to things that are easy to do.
 - The new system is a benefit for the community. People need to be reminded that what they do has an impact on the entire community.
 - Illegal dumping is a huge issue and needs to be addressed.
- New Fees:
 - It would be better if \$30.43 could be made an even number (\$30 or \$31).
 - There should be the option to request a smaller cart and pay a lower fee.
 - How does this fee compare with the fees charged in communities on the mainland? Hard to compare apples and apples, since many U.S. communities offer curbside recycling.
 - Fee should be included in property tax bills, not assessed separately.

- Some residents will want to register with their neighbors as one account and share a cart (and the fee).
- Illegal burning and dumping may become a bigger problem with the new fees.
- Carts:
 - People who recycle do not need such a large cart. Provide the option of a smaller cart with a reduced fee.
 - Mayors should have carts/bins to collect recyclables from constituents.
- Collection Issues:
 - Since there are no curbs at many residences, roads/streets are narrow and two-way, and residents will roll their carts to the edge of the grass on to the street, trucks will likely block the road during pick ups.
 - Arrange for side-door pick up from the elderly and disabled.
 - Transfer Station/Convenience Centers need to be open on Sundays when people are cleaning. Having the centers closed Sunday and Monday may contribute to illegal dumping.
 - RFID tags are good idea.
 - Bulky waste and HHW services: good idea.
 - Excess tags: How much will they cost?
 - Appliance vendors now deliver appliances and leave the OCC for residents to dispose. With the ban on OCC now extended to residents, SWMD needs to ask these vendors to take the OCC and not leave it to residents to dispose.
- Promotion:
 - People in Guam love games of chance, getting something for free; bingo is big. Consider working with retailers and others to give people opportunities to enter a drawing or get stamps to be redeemed for something (e.g., a compost bin)
 - Composting: Home Depot and other independent hardware stores don't currently carry compost bins. Work with retailers to order compost bins and provide them for a reduced rate as part of a special promotion or drawing.
 - KUAM TV is doing stories on Green Tips.
 - TV spots to promote registration and proper disposal/recycling would be effective.
 - Work through the schools to promote registration.
 - Promote to all Gov Guam employees.
 - Arrange to promote the cart system and registration through Peggy Denny's K-57 "Where We Live" show.
 - Registration could occur at flea markets (Dededo)
 - Public ed materials do not need to be translated. English is fine. There are too many other languages we would need to accommodate.
 - Schools are in need of money so any kind of contest should include a monetary reward.
- Public ed materials (brochure and cart hanger):
 - Brochure and cart hanger look great, appealing.
 - Consider a door hanger instead of a cart hanger.
 - Page 5 of brochure and cart hanger: Add "Recycle aluminum cans through I-Recycle at the schools. www.irecycleguam.org."
 - Waste oil can be recycled into bio-diesel
- Food waste composting; other issues:
 - Piggeries should take food waste as well as shredded paper and OCC.
 - Dept. of Agriculture is looking into this and there is an upcoming training program that Peggy Denny is going to attend. Peggy worked with schools

and others to deliver phone books to pig and other farms for bedding and composting. Northern farmers are more enthusiastic than Southern farmers about using shredded paper.

- Korean company is exploring food waste composting on the island.
- Partnership with Home Depot (HD):
 - **Special drawing for a compost bin.** HD has a number of “Go Green” products, such as CFLs, cleaning products, tankless water heaters and Energy Star appliances. Every time someone purchases one of these, they would be eligible to enter a drawing for a free compost bin, donated by HD.
 - **Composting classes.** HD has “first Saturday” classes and a children’s learning center. These are well attended events, and if we could arrange for a presenter to conduct classes, HD would promote them. They can accommodate as many classes as we want to conduct.
 - **Pallet giveaways.** HD has untreated wood pallets that they would offer for free for constructing compost bins. Need to resolve issue of whether pallet bins might contribute to termites infestations.
 - **Composting/grasscycling flyer with info. on HD as a source for materials.** A flyer at registration that gives more detailed instructions and sources for materials.
 - **Posters.** If we could create a poster that includes the trash collection “dos and don’ts” that are in the draft brochure, HD would post it in the learning centers.
 - People are asking for recycling bins at HD, in anticipation of the materials ban. They are stocking up on bins.
 - Issue of appliance deliveries. Residents are asking the appliance delivery crews to take back corrugated cardboard, but HD is not happy about it. They do it anyway.
 - What about Christmas trees? HD sells the trees and residents have asked HD to take them after the holidays, but HD doesn’t do it. Need to promote where this material goes.
 - Illegal dumping is a huge concern.
- Partnership with KUAM TV:
 - **Series of segments on Think Green, KUAM CareForce.** This is a segment that airs every Monday.
 - **Top of the Mind** on KUAM.com. Did you know.....[facts about trash collection and solid waste in Guam...visit www.kuam.com]
 - **TV ad.**
- Partnership with Guam Public School System:
 - **Contest.** Contests are big in the schools (EPA had a fish naming contest). Work through superintendent to arrange any contest. Slogan contest for younger kids, or a song or poster contest. Video contest for teens.
 - **Curriculum.** Schools would be open to a grade level-appropriate recycling curriculum with activity sheets. Again, work through the superintendent.
 - **Flyers to encourage registration.** GPSS would be willing to do this. Work through superintendent.
 - **Private schools.** Involve them and work through the Archdiocese.
 - Translate public ed materials in Chuukese and Chamorro. Chuuk has a consulate on Guam.