



Bulky Waste Pilot

Fall 2020

Summary:

In the fall of 2020, a Bulky Waste Pilot was conducted in NE Portland to test out what a free service could look like to residents living in multifamily, affordable housing. In partnership with residents, property managers, The Give Bin, Oregon E-Cycles, RCGS, and others, the pilot collected unwanted Bulky Waste items twice each month (over a three-month time period) from a small (40 unit) property in NE Portland, Dekum Court, as well as from The Give Bin location at the nearby Leaven Community. The same day we collected materials, we diverted as many as possible to locally-focused reuse and recycling organizations in the region, resulting in over 60% of all materials collected being diverted to those organizations. This report documents the successes, challenges, and overall findings of this pilot project.

Background:

Since 2015, [Trash for Peace](#) has been working with multifamily housing residents providing community-based sustainability education, civic engagement, and low-barrier job opportunities. Over and over, our team heard residents share concerns primarily about bulky waste, the inadequacy of their enclosures, and waste and recycling systems. Trash for Peace helped connect residents to provide input and feedback to the [2030 Regional Waste Plan](#), and in 2019 hosted a Bulky Waste Stakeholder meeting with funding from Metro, as part of our Ground Score Association program. This meeting convened multifamily housing residents, local government, canners (informal workers), and reuse organizations across the region to tackle this large (pun intended) challenge of Bulky Waste. During that meeting a task force was created that has since met every month. One of the outcomes of this task force and the stakeholder meeting was the planning and implementation of this pilot project, that began in October of 2020, to see what a free Bulky Waste collection service focused on reuse and recycling could look like.

Overall Goal: To collaboratively create and test out a Bulky Waste program rooted in environmental justice.

We hoped that this pilot would:

- a) Tangibly reduce the most burdensome waste on multifamily housing sites
- b) Alleviate financial stress for residents and the property management team
- c) Divert as much of that material from the landfill as possible, while supporting local reuse organizations

- d) Provide low-barrier job opportunities through Trash for Peace's [Ground Score Association](#) and [Environmental Promoter Programs](#) (we provided 4 part-time jobs with this pilot)
- e) Pilot [The Give Bin](#) to see if a neighborhood/community focused bin would be utilized appropriately (i.e. not filled with trash but rather usable and divertable goods).

One of the [goals](#) of the 2030 regional waste plan is to: "Increase the access, affordability and consistency of services for bulky, hazardous, illegally dumped and other challenging materials."

This pilot highlights exciting opportunities to meet that goal.

Partners:

We were very fortunate to have so many incredible partners. [The Give Bin](#) (fiscally sponsored by Trash for Peace) installed one of their bins at the [Leaven Community](#) and it was incredibly successful. Every week we arrived to pick up material, it was brimming with good quality clothes and small electronics, 100% of which (over 1,510 lbs) were diverted to reuse organizations. As program lead, Adam Gittler of this organization was fundamental in the operation of the entire pilot project. Michael Fawcett, one of our Ground Score coordinators, and Rigel Hope, of Rebuilding Center, were also incredible in managing material pickup/dropoff logistics, as well as data collection and tracking.

[RCSG solutions](#) very graciously donated one of their fleet vehicles for us to use for this project, which we will continue to utilize in the future.

[Oregon E-Cycles](#) contributed to the funding of this project by compensating us for electronics collected.

[ECR Recycling](#) extended free mattress recycling halfway through this pilot, as mattresses were immediately a huge burden and they believed in the importance of this work.

We have a thriving reuse network in Portland, and many of them partnered with us, taking in items and meeting us even in their time off to see if what we brought to them could be gleaned: [The Arc](#), [Free Geek](#), [Transition Projects](#), [Reclaim It](#), and more!

[Home Forward](#)'s staff was flexible and very helpful in working with us to allow this pilot project on one of their housing sites.

[DEQ Materials Management grant](#): We received this two-year grant in 2019, and because of necessary changes due to COVID, were given permission to allow for labor for this project to be funded under our original proposal.

The Bulky Waste Task Force was also immensely helpful in meeting monthly, lending advice, suggestions, and connections from across our region. The current members of this task force

include: Alicia Polacok (City of Portland), Marie-Helene Diodati (DEQ), Tenille Beseda and Dakota Tangredi (Clackamas County), Elizabeth Cole (City of Beaverton), Maycell Villanueva (Washington County), Adam Gittler (The Give Bin), Michael Fawcett (Trash for Peace/Ground Score), Nick Isbister (City of Gresham). Towards the beginning of the year, Jon Baker (formerly with ReBuilding Center), Shaunna Sutcliffe (formerly with City of Gresham), and Kelsey Hill (formerly with Metro) also participated in the task force.

Timeline/process:

We began this pilot in October of 2020 and picked up Bulky Waste items (initially, no mattresses and no hazardous waste throughout the duration; ECR's services allowed us to recycle the former halfway through the pilot) every other Saturday through December. We worked with residents living on-site (Environmental Promoters) to help post a flyer on each door every month. This flyer asked residents to leave unwanted items next to the enclosure (our team never went into the enclosure or pulled out any items once thrown into the dumpster) by 11am on the Saturday of collection, or to call us to pick-up from their doorstep. We also worked with the Resident Services Coordinator and the property manager to spread the word about the pilot in the monthly newsletter and by word of mouth.

Our collection route began at Dekum Court. We would then pick-up material from The Give Bin at the Leaven Community center, then proceed to Reuse organizations to drop-off potentially desired goods. Each organization had the option to refuse what we were offering, which we would then keep on the truck to drop off at the Metro Transfer station as our last stop.

Before we began the pilot, we confirmed our partnerships and staffing and determined a route and a timeframe. We confirmed that the reuse organizations would be available for drop-off/gleaning. The pilot ran on Saturdays from 10am-3pm, roughly. We very quickly realized that we were going to run out of space with the small donated RCSG truck, so we began renting Zipcar vans the second month.

Successes:

We were thrilled with the results of this pilot and ultimately achieved all of our goals.

1. We collected (see Appendix I) an estimated 4,473 pounds of material, with 2,682 pounds, or **60%** of that being diverted to reuse organizations. This total includes material from The Give Bin, placed at Leaven Community just South of Dekum. Separately, at Dekum we collected 2,963 pounds of material, with 60% being diverted. The Give Bin collected 1,510 pounds of material, with 100% being diverted from the landfill. **It is worth noting that all of the material we collected at Dekum Court would have otherwise gone to the landfill.**
2. Overall, considering the weather and quality of items collected, more material was divertable/reusable than we thought. It is also not prohibitively expensive to dispose of unwanted items at the waste transfer centers.
3. This pilot was able to save the property money (the full amount was not disclosed, but the property manager has to pay to have a maintenance team come and collect bulky items. By December, the number of times on average that

a pick-up was scheduled went from 4 to 1). This pilot also helped keep the property cleaner and supported residents in having an easy and free way to dispose of items they no longer wanted.

One of the Dekum residents shared: *"I strongly believe the Bulky Waste Pilot in Dekum Court was really helpful. I was short on money to pay for the required fee to dispose of my extra furniture and appliances, and I do not have a car/truck to take my old mattresses to the disposal facility. YES I would like the service to continue. I think usually the trash facilities are really messy with bulky waste."*

4. We were able to support reuse organizations by delivering items directly to them, especially during the pandemic when many of their original sources were no longer available (such as gleaning from the transfer stations).

Quote from Michael Fawcett, Program Coordinator and Ground Score Worker:

"Each trip we had organizations happy to take many of the unwanted items so that they could be repurposed. It felt good that we could help people dispose of dressers and tables that they no longer needed at no cost to them- even if some of it did end up going to the landfill."

5. Finally, we supported community members with The Give Bin by having an easy and convenient place to get rid of unwanted smaller items, especially in a way that guarantees their donation to local organizations.
6. **The total number and weight of items collected increased every collection run (see Appendix II).** There was clearly a need for this service, and the residents, property manager, and reuse organizations that participated were incredibly appreciative.

Challenges:

Despite the successes, this pilot did encounter capacity challenges:

1. Transportation- turns out, we needed a larger vehicle, very quickly. Once the word got out, the amount of items that were waiting for us to collect quickly surpassed our capacity, hence needing to rent a zip van, and then by our last couple of runs, we outgrew both vehicles. In the future, having a box van (such as a 26 foot truck that would **not** require a CDL) is essential for a more efficient service.
2. Volume - people have an *immense* amount of stuff, more than we expected - serving more than one property would require a larger investment of time and resources than we had originally estimated.
3. Storage - as we have no place to store unwanted items that are divertable/reusable, serving multiple properties in a week may be difficult - this is not an insurmountable problem, but it does address the challenges of scaling up this kind of a project.
4. Outlying Materials - without a doubt, every week we encountered a large number of mattresses- it is essential to include them in any kind of effort such as this.

Costs:

The majority of the costs for this pilot were provided by Trash for Peace (DEQ grant funds for labor), and The Give Bin and RCSG (labor and transportation).

Cost for each trip (total of 6 trips, bi-monthly for 3 months):

Item	Cost	In-kind	Total
Labor	\$1,800 <u>Includes:</u> \$300/trip (\$25/hour for two workers for 5 hours each, plus \$50 in assistance from Environmental Promoters for outreach)	\$3,900 <u>Includes:</u> -\$900 (30 hours total, TfP Executive Director @\$30/hour) -\$3,000 (Adam Gittler time as program lead- 60 hours, or 5 hours a week for 12 weeks @\$50/hour)	\$5,700
Transportation	\$558 <u>Includes:</u> \$93/trip plus insurance and gas	RCSG Cargo Van (estimated at \$25K)	\$558 (not including price of van)
The Give Bin purchase and installation	n/a	\$2,000	\$2,000
Dumping fees	\$180 <u>Includes:</u> \$30/trip on average	n/a	\$180
Total	\$423/trip* or \$2,538 for the duration of the pilot	\$5,900	\$8,438.00

*To service JUST The Give Bin, the estimated costs are \$109 per trip

Estimating for expansion:

When looking at scaling up this project, a few considerations need to be made:

- Start-up costs for a vehicle and the installation of Give Bins would be one-time costs.
- When adding in more apartment sites, the collection and donation routes can be created to ensure time efficiency.

- Project management costs would not increase drastically.
- To include more apartments, the main costs that would increase would be labor (from main collection crew) and gas.
- A central warehouse could facilitate the collection and drop off of a wider variety and larger amount of reusable goods as well as redistribution of those goods to a larger pool of reuse organizations. It would also reduce the number of necessary stops for donating, cutting down on costs.
- Discussions with haulers could result in a partnership. For example, bulky items could be collected consistently once/month, with selected non-profit organizations able to glean divertable/reusable items during the interim.

Recommendations:

It is clear that there is a need to provide a service such as this to multifamily residents across our region, especially those that live in affordable housing.

A. A streamlined, well-funded project has the potential to:

- a) Provide essential jobs and support a more diverse workforce
- b) Divert material tonnage from the landfill
- c) Support reuse organizations and their need for affordable, resellable items
- d) Save properties money
- e) Support haulers by making their routes more efficient
- f) Improve EPR programs that lack a transportation component (such as Oregon E-cycles)
- g) Contribute to cleaner recycling streams by removing many of the materials that clog up enclosures

B. It is worth pursuing more funding to expand this project, or similar projects, not just through Trash for Peace but through similar organizations that center the community and the environment. Funding could be achieved through a variety of means; grants, contracts with properties or housing agencies, long-term, small rate increases in local jurisdictions and/or funding through expanded EPR policies relating to Bulky Waste (such as mattresses, already in progress, and sofas/other large furniture).

C. In order for this work to be successful long-term, code and regulation updates from local governments are required to allow third parties to have legal access to unwanted bulky materials.

D. Work with the city to invest in a warehouse space to sort/store materials. This could be integral to scaling up as well as providing more opportunities for reuse organizations to glean/pick-up material when convenient for them.

Next Steps:

Based on conversations with the Dekum Court property manager, this pilot will continue for another 2-3 months with the Trash for Peace team picking up only the items the team deems it

can divert to local reuse organizations, for free, from the Dekum Court property, on an ***on-call*** basis. These items will likely include electronics, small appliances, children's toys, wooden furniture, and small mattresses. It will not include furniture made out of particle board, sofas or couches, or hazardous materials. This will be a good case study of whether or not an on-call system will be more successful (and feasible) at diverting unwanted items, versus bi-monthly, and if the amount of material collected will still benefit the property by saving it money and keeping enclosures less clogged.

In addition:

- The Trash for Peace team will continue to research similar programs and companies around the country to compare best practices, such as [Check Sammy](#), as well as conduct more surveys to get feedback from residents on the program's efficacy. If this program continues to be successful, the property manager may be able to contribute funds to support consistent service by Trash for Peace at Dekum Court.
- The Trash for Peace team will continue to service The Give Bin with grant funds (to cover labor) and support from RCG Solutions.
- The Bulky Waste Task Force will continue to meet monthly and discuss possible new partnerships and expansion opportunities for this work.
- The Trash for Peace team is committed to partnering with local reuse organizations, governments, and haulers, to improve our waste and recycling systems so they are more effective and equitable.

Since January 2021, we have collected nearly 2,500 additional pounds of material. This includes 270 pounds (wooden furniture) from Dekum Court and 2,150 pounds (of clothes, shoes, bedding) from The Give Bin, 100% of which has been diverted from the landfill.

For photos and more visual data, please inquire and/or check out our social media pages, <https://www.facebook.com/TrashForPeace/>, <https://www.facebook.com/groundscore.association/> and on instagram @trashforpeace and @groundscore.association and @thegivebin

For more information, please contact:

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APPENDIX I: Data from Pilot, October - December 2020

Date	Items collected	Where was item from	Donatable? If so, to where?	Estimated weight (lbs)	% Diversion
10/10/20	2 suitcases	Adam (Dekum)	TPI, Arc	5	
	2 bags of clothes	Adam (Dekum)	TPI, Arc	20	
	1 table	Dekum	Reclaim It!	25	
	Children's playset	Dekum	Reclaim It!	15	
	Microwave	Adam (Dekum)	Arc	40	
	2 speakers	Adam (Dekum)	Free Geek	25	
	1 Pillow	Adam (Dekum)	Arc	1	131 lbs total for 10/10, 0 lbs. went to the landfill (0%)
10/24/20	Wooden Table/Chair	Dekum	Reclaim It!	30	
	Wooden Table	Dekum	Left at Dekum		
	Television	Dekum	Arc	40	
	Microwave	Dekum	Arc	15	
	Electric Heater	Dekum	Arc	20	
	Child's Car Seat	Dekum	Metro	10	
	Hide-a-Bed Couch	Dekum	Metro	280	
	Clothing	Michael (Dekum)	Arc	10	
	Electronics	Michael/Adam (Dekum)	Arc	15	420 lbs total for 10/24, 294 lbs to landfill (70%)
11/07/2020	Chaise Lounge	Dekum	Metro Transfer	60	

	End Table w/ Mirror	Dekum	Reclaim It!	35	
	Chest w/ No Drawers	Dekum	Metro Transfer	70	
	Television	Dekum	Free Geek	20	
	Reclining Chair	Dekum	Metro Transfer	40	
	Razor Scooter	Dekum	Metro Transfer	4	
	Plastic Chest	Dekum	Metro Transfer	4	
	Baby Crib Rails	Dekum	Metro Transfer	4	
	Books (2 bags)	Michael (Dekum)	Reclaim It!	25	
	Clothing (100) pounds	Leaven (Give Bin)	Arc	100	
	Table w/ One chair	Dekum	Reclaim It!	45	
	TV Stand (Glass Front)	Dekum	Metro Transfer	10	
	Wet/Dry Vacuum	Dekum	Free Geek	10	
	Chest of Drawers	Dekum	Metro Transfer	50	477 pounds total, 242lbs went to landfill (50%)
11/21/2020	Mattresses (6)	Dekum	Metro Transfer	300	
	Office Chair	Dekum	Metro Transfer	40	
	Bed Frame (metal)	Dekum	Metro Transfer	15	
	Bed Frame (wooden)	Dekum	Metro Transfer	45	
	Clothes and Shoes	Leaven (Give Bin)	TPI	160	
	Vinyl Records (31)	Leaven (Give Bin)	Reclaim It!	25	
	Books	Leaven (Give Bin)	Reclaim It!	46	
	Misc. Office Supplies	Leaven (Give Bin)	Free Geek	4	

	Phone, Misc. Electronics	Leaven (Give Bin)	Free Geek	5	
	Misc. Kitchen Items	Leaven (Give Bin)	ARC	20	660 lbs total, 400 lbs went to landfill (61%)
12/05/2020	Couch	Dekum Court	Metro Transfer	125	
	Plastic Chest	Dekum Court	Metro Transfer	5	
	Lounge Chair	Dekum Court	Metro Transfer	65	
	Pans	Dekum Court	TPI	25	
	Chair	Dekum Court	Metro Transfer	55	
	Pictures	Dekum Court	TPI	5	
	Mattress	Dekum Court	ECR	80	
	Rug	Dekum Court	TPI	15	
	Misc.items, cardboard	Dekum Court	Metro Transfer	30	
	Clothes, Shoes, Blankets, Books	Give Bin	TPI	350	1160 lbs total, 280 lbs went to landfill (24%)
12/19/2020	Wooden Chest	Dekum Court	Metro Transfer	75	
	Wooden Bureau	Dekum Court	Metro Transfer	250	
	Wooden Table	Dekum Court	Reclaim It!	40	
	Queen Mattress	Dekum Court	ECR	100	
	Full-size Mattress and Boxspring	Dekum Court	ECR	110	
	Wooden Cabinet	Dekum Court	Metro Transfer	125	
	Clothes, Shoes, Blankets, Books	Give Bin	TPI/ARC	800	
	Vacuum Cleaner	Dekum Court	Metro Transfer	25	
	Child Car Seat	Dekum Court	Metro Transfer	25	
	Wooden Headboard	Dekum Court	Metro Transfer	75	1625 lbs total, 575 lbs went to

					landfill (35%)
					TOTAL WASTE COLLECTED: 4,473 lbs
					TOTAL DIVERTED: 2,682, or 60%
					Total collected from Leaven: 1,510, 100% diverted

APPENDIX II: Weight collected per run

