

"One UA Voice"

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Over the course of the last four weeks, residents have witnessed contractor personnel **mixing recyclables** with regular trash (called "comingling"). This is confirmed by the Assistant City Manager in his report to Council on April 21.

Why is this important?

Because the city earns \$225,000 per year by selling its paper recyclables to another hauler. If our paper is being mixed with trash and taken to the landfill, we don't get that credit. The city, not the contractor, pays the "tipping fees" to SWACO for trash disposal. My understanding is that it pays \$33 per ton for regular trash, \$15 per ton for plastic/glass/aluminum, and it **receives** \$42-45 per ton for paper. If paper and plastic/glass/aluminum are dumped as regular trash, we are losing \$75 and \$18 per ton, respectively! I hope that the city is sending the contractor a bill for the difference.

But there's a bigger issue here.

In using stickers, the city has espoused a "pay as you throw" policy. As mentioned above, the city (and by extension, us as taxpayers) is getting credited for selling its paper. This credit of \$225,000 translates into an average of roughly \$20 per household per year. Should not **this credit be allocated to individual households based on how much paper they generate?** A "reap as you throw" policy to be consistent with the "pay as you throw" for regular trash?

For example, our house gets the Dispatch all 7 days, and my husband and I subscribe to numerous periodicals. Shouldn't we be credited more than, say, a household that doesn't subscribe to any print media? I would think so. Plus, this would encourage us to recycle more. Makes sense to me.

Three weeks ago, *Fortune* magazine (4/28/08) ran an [article](#) about "green companies," one of which was a 4-year old company out of Philadelphia called "[RecycleBank](#)." This company -- at no charge -- picks up all recyclables and ... get this ... **pays households for their recyclables** in the form of gift certificates to retailers like CVS and Whole Foods!

How does it work? Each household's trashcan has a unique RFID (radio frequency identification) chip embedded in it. When the truck picks up the can, it weighs it and credits the household's account for the amount collected. These credits can then be used to buy retailer certificates. Account credits can be checked online.

Seems to me that this would have been an option worth exploring prior to committing to a 5-year contract with the new contractor.

Check out RecycleBank at www.recyclebank.com. Better yet, call/write the City Manager or members of Council and have them contact RecycleBank to see if this would be of benefit to UA residents.

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