

Summary of Results from Online Survey

After over two months of outreach, the results of the Business Recycling Survey have been compiled and can be seen below.

Once the Zero Waste website was launched in February 2008, over 2,000 emails were sent to businesses, chambers of commerce, and business district members throughout the City of San José, with direct links to the website and survey, and with some information about the goals of the City in soliciting businesses' input. Using traditional mail, over 20,000 flyers were sent to the commercial waste collection customers (facilities managers and business owners) with an invitation to access the online survey. Various City departments with close contacts to businesses in SNI districts were enlisted to help get the word out. City staff attended a number of business district meetings to make personal contacts and answer questions. Through these efforts in addition to print and electronic media, we received over 500 survey responses, a statistically significant sample of opinion.

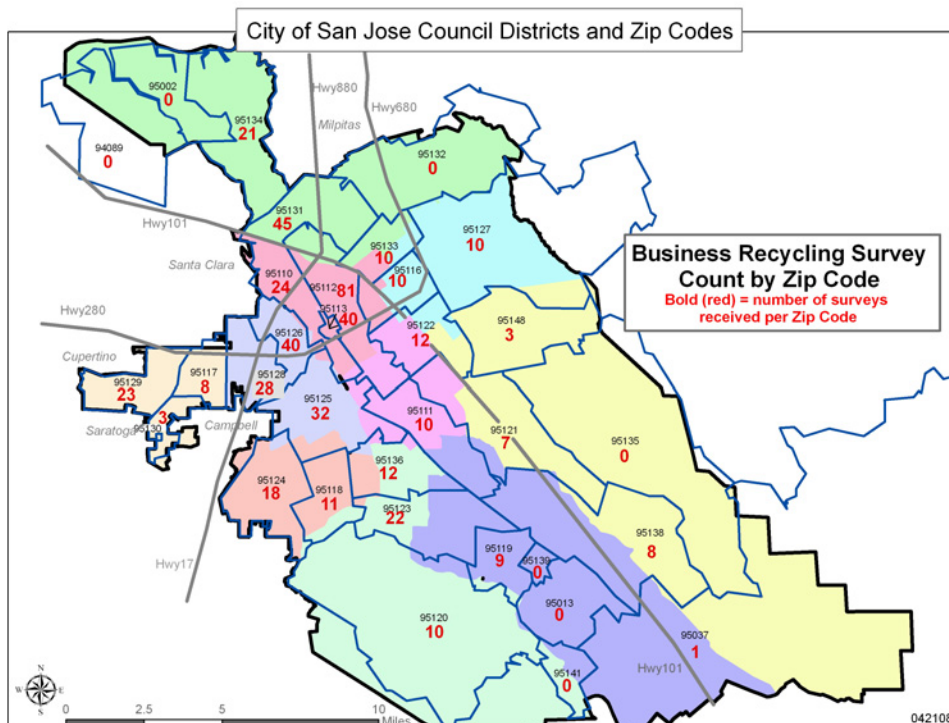
We very much appreciate the time business owners gave from their busy schedules to give us this information. Here are some results from the survey.

Description of Respondents

Survey respondents represented businesses of all types – large and small, high tech, manufacturing and administrative – from all areas of the City. The following map shows the geographic locations of the survey respondents.

Survey Distribution

Map 1: Total number of surveys by zip code



Descriptions of Businesses – Type, Location, Number Employees, Square Footage

The initial survey questions provided data to describe the type of business of the respondents. Businesses were described by type, location and size. The following charts summarize the range of businesses that responded to the survey.

Chart 1: Business Types

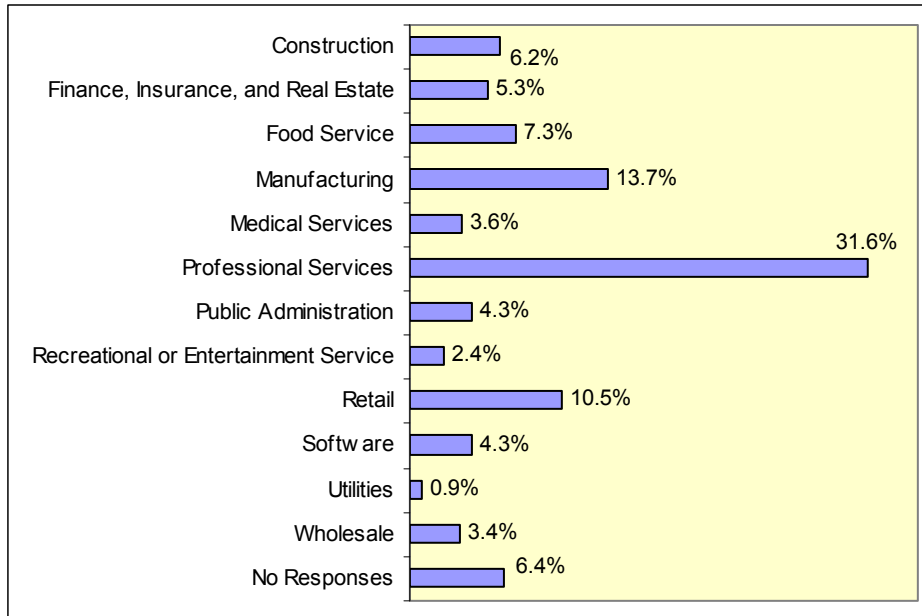


Chart 2: Type of Location

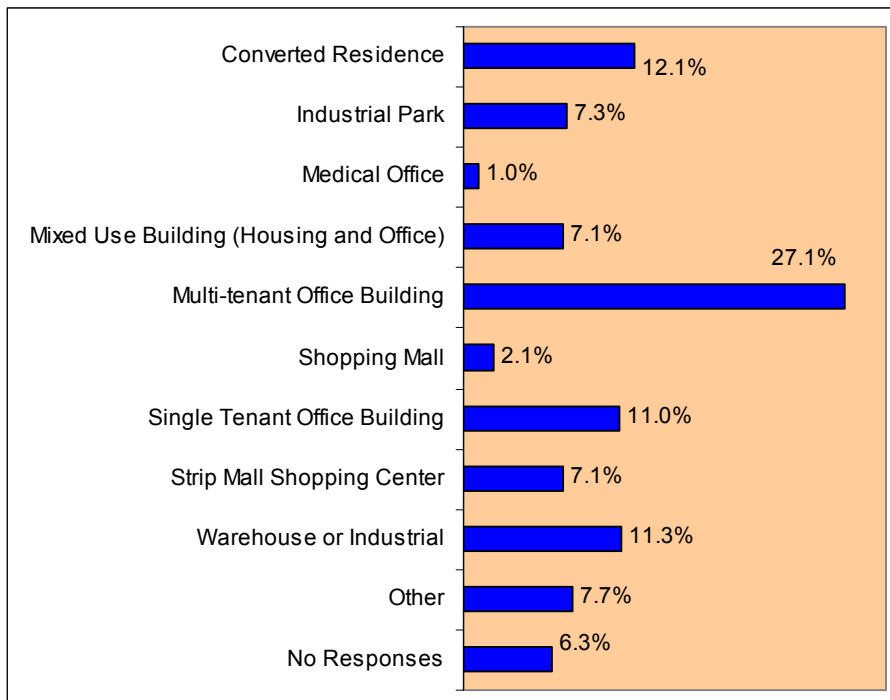


Chart 3: Number of employees

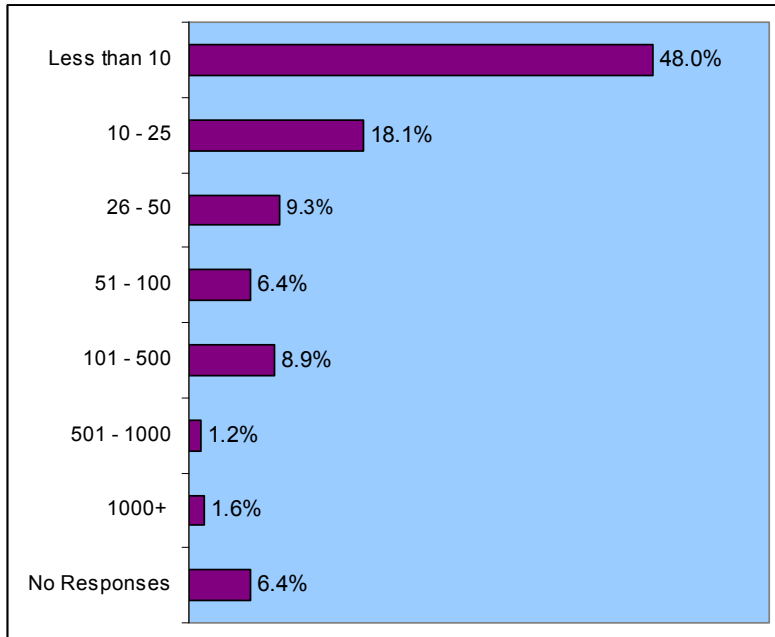
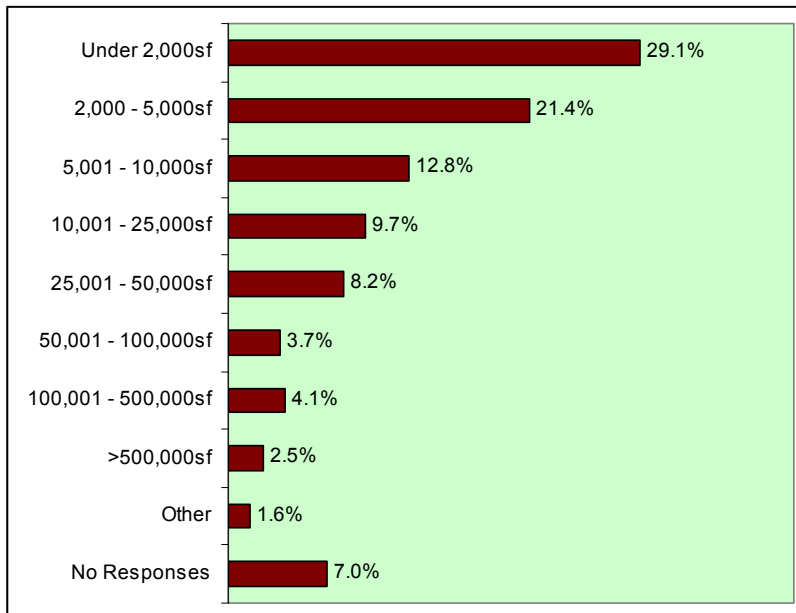


Chart 4: Square footage of business site



Responses

The following responses represent key survey categories.

1. If your business recycles, identify the top two reasons why you are recycling.

1. Concern about the environment and conserving natural resources.
2. Company owner or top-level management requested recycling

9% of businesses described themselves as not doing any recycling.

2. What are your business' three biggest obstacles to recycling more?

1. Space limitations for recycling containers
2. Hauler does not offer the service we need
3. Separating materials is not convenient or takes too much time

These obstacles were the same for small, medium and large businesses (according to square footage).

A number of survey-takers indicated that for their business, someone takes the recycling materials home to be recycled there.

3. How could your business increase recycling? Comments.

1. More recycling choices provided by the hauler
2. Lower costs for service
3. Receiving assistance in designing and implementing collection programs

Themes which emerged from 111 comments:

	Number of comments
There are no recycling services offered by the building owner (or landlord, or janitorial service)	39
Capacity-related comment: no secure shredding service, no pick-up of e-waste, or "Various items require different programs"	28
Recycling program is adequate as is	22

4. Exclusive or non-exclusive or exclusive? Comments.

The following information relates to the question of a non-exclusive system, such as what currently exists in the City of San Jose, versus an exclusive system, where a hauler would be selected and rates negotiated by the City. The question was stated as follows:

"In some large cities, one hauler is selected to serve all commercial customers and the city establishes performance standards related to customer service, quality of service, public education, variety of container sizes and recycling services offered, etc. In these "exclusive franchise" systems, businesses are required to use the city-selected hauling company and the city establishes the rates the customers are charged for service. Based on what you know today, which of the two systems do you prefer? Please give us comments to explain your preference.

49.1% respondents - businesses select their own provider.

50.8% respondents - businesses use a hauler selected by City.

The survey results were compared by business sectors, and business sizes.

	Number	Business selects provider (non-exclusive)	City selects provider (exclusive)
Small businesses (less than 5,000 sf)	244	41.4%	58.6%
Small businesses (less than 25 employees)	314	43.2%	56.8%
Large businesses (100 or more employees)	51	65.6%	34.4%
Construction industry	29	59.1%	40.9%
Food-service industry	32	58.3%	41.7%

Comments

55% of the respondents had comments regarding exclusive versus non-exclusive. Many comments were similar, or could be grouped along common themes as follows.

Comment type	Number	%
Positive remark, such as City selection and/or exclusive proposal creates economies of scale, and the feeling that recycling could be improved with one hauling system	78	30.2%
Prefer to keep control of the negotiations for cost and service.	56	21.7%
Prefer to have the City arrange for garbage/recycling service rather than shop for service themselves (“I’m a small business. Don’t have time to shop around. Let the City do it.”)	45	17.4%
Negative comments regarding City management of garbage services	40	15.5%
Belief that the open market provides the best pricing for businesses.	39	15.1%

5. Price sensitivity regarding increased services for recycling

If hauler removed recyclables from garbage at a sorting facility...

	Favored or strongly favored	Neutral	Opposed or strongly opposed
...would you be willing to pay additional 5-10%?	36%	24%	40%
...would you be willing to pay additional 10-20%?	14%	21%	65%
If hauler or City provided technical assistance/support to increase recycling ...			
...would you be willing to pay additional 5-10%?	25%	32%	43%

6. Suggestions on how the City could increase recycling for businesses

170 ideas and suggestions were provided. Not all comments are listed here. The following are some of the common themes that emerged.

- Educate & give incentives to encourage recycling.
- Advertise that the City of San Jose takes pride in being clean and recycles! Hopefully, the citizens and the companies will start to feel the pride and automatically start to change.
- Awareness, incentives and publishing statistics - also promoting communication about companies setting positive examples (as well as schools, merchants, etc).
- Many offices do not have any recycling services in the building
- Lower rate incentives for those who recycle.
- More cooperation between government and business. Working together towards a common goal versus controls and fines. Offer incentives for businesses to recycle, versus fines.
- Make it simple for companies to sort and separate the recyclables for pickup.