

# Barbara Coombs

These comments are in reference to creating Waste Management Plans for Texas:

Garbage per Capita is a critical metric that needs to be promoted for the immense influence it has to motivate and educate the citizenry on how they as individuals are affecting the environment. The State of Texas has only reduced their garbage per capita by .09% in 20 years. Please read that number carefully that is less than 1/10th of 1% While the City of Richardson Texas has reduced their garbage by 14% in the last three years. Why? Because the City of Richardson knew what their garbage per capita was and realized they could implement programs to improve it. During that same three years Frisco reduced their garbage by 8%, Allen by almost 12%, Plano by 6% and McKinney by almost 4% If TCEQ and the Council of Governments would adjust the reporting provided by the landfills to require that the landfills report their tons by county of origination in addition to the consolidated number of tons disposed in a landfill. This would fix the ignorance and complacency. (The total tons disposed will be identified, just broken down by jurisdiction prior to reporting the consolidated total tons). Texas can become a leader in the country for waste reduction - currently we are 29th in the country according to the EPA for number of pounds of garbage per person disposed per day.

Measuring all the recyclables is ineffective. If it was so helpful at attracting industry we would have been better prepared when China pulled out of the market in 2018.

As a side note please do not let the Mattress Recycling Council set-up shop in Texas like they have done in CA and Rhode Island. Their objective is to destroy the mattresses and take them off of the market. There is a viable mattress refurbishment industry here in Texas. Bring back the mattress inspectors that were defunded in 2015 and give Salvation Army a bigger seat at the table to collect mattresses for the large refurbishers that process thousands of mattresses per month. All revenue earned by Salvation Army goes to their drug and alcohol rehabilitation program. That is circularity we should focus on, not counting the recyclables. Austin provided an RFP for processing 18,000 mattresses per year. Multiply that by all cities in Texas that have a Salvation Army and we can get-r-done. The large established mattress refurbishers have had to send trucks to Louisiana and Oklahoma to get mattresses. Really? Why? Texas is so asleep at the wheel on recycling - we have the infrastructure and we could create so many more jobs if we would keep our focus on motivating the cities with the simple metric of GPC - then the programs would happen. Build a website of best practices - Austin has a brushy/ bulky collection program that is the envy of most cities. Frisco has a C&D recycling program. Lets get the word out.

# Hey Frisco!

## YOU DESERVE A FIST BUMP!

BY BARBARA COOMBS

**Way to go, Frisco!** If you want to know how environmental your city is, measure how much garbage is thrown away per person. Out of the five cities that share the landfill managed by the North Texas Municipal Water District, Frisco has the lowest Garbage per Capita (GPC), or the number of pounds of garbage thrown away per person per day. GPC is a great metric for measuring the success of reduce, reuse and recycling education programs. Since Frisco is using the landfill at a slower rate (thus extending the life of the landfill), they are saving the other four cities money.

A new landfill can cost upwards of \$500,000 per acre to construct. The longer this construction is deferred, the more money taxpayers save! This viewpoint sounds like justification to charge a higher rate at the landfill to cities with a high GPC. The national average is 4.5 pounds per person per day. The state of Texas averages 7.22 pounds per person per day. Hurricanes do affect the numbers, as revealed by the South East Regional Planning Commission which includes Beaumont, Texas. The GPC in the Beaumont region is 13.25 pounds per person per day, almost three times the national average. Identifying the GPC for your region will reveal how effective your programs are at diverting material from the landfill.

In Richardson, it is more expensive to recycle than to throw material away. Commercial garbage collection in Richardson is subsidized by city trucks. Recycling service in Richardson is

available from a variety of vendors - none of these vendors can provide recycling service as low as the city garbage collection service. Since it is more expensive to recycle in Richardson than to throw away, there is little diversion from the landfill and lots of disposal.

Another reason why measuring GPC as the way to measure diversion is because measuring all the recycling accumulated is just



not wise. If you only measure the recycling as the way to measure diversion (for example, if you have 1,000 tons of garbage and 300 tons of recycling, then the environmental accountants see this as a 30 percent recycling rate) it does nothing to encourage reduce and reuse practices. If you get high fives for having a humongous pile of recycling, why would you use a reusable bottle? Measuring the recycling encourages creating another pile rather than eliminating waste, recyclable or otherwise. If we are aiming for zero

waste, let's measure the waste, not the amount of recycling. Garbage per Capita: lowest score wins!

For more information, visit [www.ntmwd.com/our-solid-waste-system](http://www.ntmwd.com/our-solid-waste-system) and/or [www.environmentalbenchmarking.com](http://www.environmentalbenchmarking.com)

*Barbara Eastwood Coombs has facilitated the implementation of recycling programs since 1988, including working with corporations, city and county facilities, universities and schools.*

LOCAL GARBAGE PER CAPITA PER DAY

**1<sup>ST</sup> FRISCO**

3.81 lbs. of GPC per day.

**2<sup>ND</sup> ALLEN**

3.94 lbs. of GPC per day.

**3<sup>RD</sup> PLANO**

4.47 lbs. of GPC per day.

**4<sup>TH</sup> MCKINNEY**

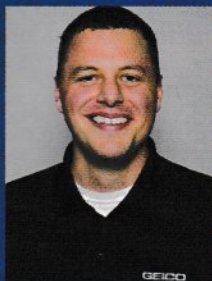
4.93 lbs. of GPC per day.

**5<sup>TH</sup> RICHARDSON**

5.09 lbs. of GPC per day.

**REAL. LOCAL. SAVINGS.**

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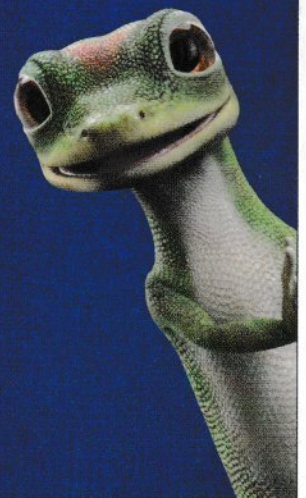
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CITY	Magazine Publication	GPC 2018/19	GPC 2019/20	GPC 2020/21	Official LBS reduced from 2019 -2021	Total % reduction in waste from 2019-2021
Frisco	3.81	3.5	3.3	3.21	0.29	8.3%
Allen	3.94	3.99	3.92	3.52	0.47	11.8%
Plano	4.47	4.51	4.3	4.22	0.29	6.4%
McKinney	4.93	4.77	4.53	4.59	0.18	3.8%
Richardson	5.09	5.23	4.92	4.48	0.75	14.3%

For Frisco Style Magazine Nov. 2020 publication: "Hey Frisco, You Deserve a Fist Bump!" Population data was aquired from google, thereafter a contact was established in the planning department to identify the official population number.

2018/2019 data used for publication; Fiscal year for NTMWD landfill is October 1 - September 30

Richardson moved to fourth place passing McKinney, by reducing their waste by 14.3% in two years. Richardson is first place for largest percentage reduction in Garbage per person generated of all five cities.

GPC - Garbage per Capita is the number of pounds per person per day - generated and disposed. This includes all garbage - industrial, commercial and residential. ALL Garbage generated within the city.

Easy to calculate:

It is the total pounds of garbage disposed for the year divided by the total population then divided by 365.

A simple calculation that all cities should be able to know, but, it requires good data from the landfills to identify the tonnages generated from a county, city or jurisdiction.

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