iCAP Team Recommendation

Name of iCAP Team: Zero Waste

iCAP Team Chair and Vice-Chair: Shreya Mahajan and Nishant Garg

Date submitted to iWG: 3/22/23

Recommendation title: Tailgate Recycling Program (ZW010)

For internal use only: Date reviewed by iCAP Working Group:

Specific actions/policy recommendation:

The Zero Waste Team recommends that Facilities & Services (F&S) and the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics (DIA) work with the Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment (iSEE) to implement a recycling program at tailgate events during the 2023 football season and beyond.

The following would require F&S to provide blue bags, which Athletics will distribute to tailgate participants when they are checking in by car. These bags will contain paper instructions stapled onto each blue bag. The attached paper will convey what recyclable materials can be placed in the blue bag, and will include a map with locations of "collection hubs" (location at which a F&S recycling pan is placed) – at Lot 31 and Lot 32 – so tailgaters know where to bring their filled blue bags. In addition, F&S and iSEE will work together to solicit volunteer support for the tailgate events. Volunteers will be spread across the tailgating lots to distribute more blue bags as needed and offer educational support to fans as questions about trash and recycling arise.

Following the end of the tailgating event, volunteers will assist with clean up (recyclables collection) from the Grange Grove field. The volunteers will work with DIA to ensure that F&S receives the recyclables from this clean-up session, prior to DIA's sweep.

Additionally, the Zero Waste Team requests 1-2 iSEE tents to establish a visible presence at each "collection hub." It is recommended that 2 volunteers will be manning each tent, where they will be collecting filled blue bags from fans, handing out more blue bags, and incentivizing/rewarding participants with free merchandise (as available).

F&S, iSEE, and DIA will communicate with Illini Union/the Bookstore regarding opportunities for partnership. Additionally, the F&S Zero Waste Coordinator (ZWC) will communicate with campus' Coca-Cola Representative, Jake Slager, about allocating the mutual sustainability funds for tailgating merchandise. The ZWC will also work with the DIA marketing team to ensure that fans attending the game (season ticket and single ticket holders) are aware of the tailgate recycling activities happening, through their communications strategy.

Following the football event, the Zero Waste Team recommends that DIA facilitate a survey opportunity for fans, with input regarding what questions are asked from F&S and iSEE. During the November 14th, 2022 inaugural *Fighting Illini, Fighting Waste* basketball event, DIA surveyed fans with the following questions:

1. "Did you notice that this [basketball] game was a recycling-focused event?" YES / NO
2. "Did you recycle your bottles and/or cans at the [basketball] game?" YES / NO
3. "Do you support having more emphasis on recycling in future [basketball] games?" YES / NO

It is recommended that a similar approach is taken for tailgate recycling. Allowing fans to voice their feedback is crucial for DIA, iSEE, and F&S to improve on fan experience for future events.

After the football game, volunteers will work with DIA to sweep the stadium for leftover recyclables.

Suggested unit/department to address implementation:
Facilities & Services, the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics

Rationale for recommendation:
Thousands of visitors gather to tailgate before every football game, but a recycling program has yet to be implemented. The scope of Illini football is expansive in both its visibility and waste production. In Fall 2022, F&S picked up 228,520 pounds of landfilled waste from DIA football and high school play-offs. A comprehensive tailgate recycling program offers the university a unique opportunity to engage more than just the campus community, and emphasize zero waste initiatives to our greater state and out-of-state communities, peer institutions, and athletic rivals.

The rationale for this recommendation is two-fold:

1. iCAP Zero Waste objective 5.2: "Reduce the total campus waste going to landfills." Not only can tailgate recycling engage the campus community in its approach, but the nature of U of I's high-profile athletic events allows DIA, F&S,

and iSEE the opportunity to engage a much broader community in recycling and zero waste behaviors.

2. iCAP Zero Waste objective 5.2.1: "Install appropriate waste collection infrastructure." Never before has the university executed a comprehensive tailgate recycling program; the infrastructure and partnership to collect recyclables has not existed. With a three-unit partnership, tailgating events can receive the support they need to handle the separation of landfill waste from recyclables.

Connection to iCAP goals:
This recommendation relates to Zero Waste iCAP objective 5.2, "Reduce the total campus waste going to landfills from 5.049 tons in FY19 to 4.544 tons or less in FY24, which is a decrease of at least 10%." The collection of plastic and aluminum recyclables at tailgate events (there are typically 7 home games per football season) will reduce landfill waste, and thus decrease carbon emissions associated with landfill waste.

This initiative also relates to objective 5.2.1: "Install appropriate waste collection infrastructure." A specific, explicit mention is made to tailgating infrastructure in the Zero Waste chapter, on page 111:

> "Tailgates pose a unique challenge for waste collection. The high volume of individuals, reliance on disposable materials (e.g., single-use food service items), and lack of adequate receptacles over acres of space result in large quantities of landfill waste. As large gatherings are reconfigured to resume safely, we plan to transition these events to operate more sustainably as well. We propose that blue recycling bags be distributed at all tailgating parties so tailgaters can separate aluminum, cardboard, and plastics from general waste — individually, efficiently, and on-site. Individuals will deposit the blue bags alongside the usual receptacles for the F&S recycling truck to pick up after the event."

Perceived challenges:

A lack of education on material that cannot be recycled. Additionally, having people separate their glass recyclables from the blue bag given as the university does not take these items for recycling. The operation may be slow moving to start, as participants are adjusting to the new program. This can be addressed with the execution of a clear, concise, and engaging flier that will be distributed to all participants receiving a blue bag. For example, many individuals are not aware that the University currently does not recycle glass. Making it clear what can and can't be recycled on this flier should reach the audience in the most straightforward and convenient way possible.

Anticipated timeline of implementation:

A few weeks before the first game. Between 1 to 2 weeks away from the first football game of the fall season, we will set up 2 roll off pans at Lot 31 and Lot 32.

Anticipated budget (identify if cost is up-front or continuous):
The infrastructure provided by F&S will be at no-cost (blue bags, gloves, recycling pans). The services DIA will offer (handing out bags at check in, allowing us to set up) will be provided. At present, the only anticipated costs are for supplying the merchandise to support early participant incentive. We are hoping that after a few successful games, we can supply less and less merch, as the program becomes more ingrained into tailgate culture at the U of I.

Individual comments are required from each SWATeam member (one or two sentences):

Team Member Name	Team Member's Comments
Nikki Palella	I am in full support of this recommendation. F&S and DIA are willing and excited participants in this endeavor– the time to jump on this opportunity is now. Go Illini!
Shreya Mahajan	I support this plan and I think it will help divert waste from the landfill while also fulfilling our iCAP goals!
Justin Holding	I fully support this recommendation. This is an obvious and easy step to divert waste and further educate the public about the importance of sustainability.
Daphne Hulse	I support this recommendation. Because comprehensive tailgate recycling has not been implemented before, monitoring and adjusting logistics for the first few tailgates will be especially important (and feedback from fans will be key!).
Nishant Garg	
Jenna Schaefer	This will be a great way to engage the community in zero waste initiatives. I support this recommendation.

Aaron Finder	This recommendation seems to be a great opportunity to not only engage and educate students but the Urbana-Champaign community and visiting football fans. I support this recommendation.
Thurman Etchison	I support this recommendation completely. There is a huge opportunity to recycle on a large scale especially in light of the transfer station being so close to the event.
Joe Bradley	
Joy Scrogum	This effort is crucial for meeting iCAP goals and for shifting the culture of campus and the broader community toward more sustainable behavior. Integrating recycling into tailgating illustrates the University's commitment to sustainable materials management to external and internal stakeholders. The University must expand and improve recycling infrastructure and capture of recyclables, as well as encouraging and exemplifying waste reduction, if it wishes to remain relevant in a world that is already experiencing climate change.

Further explanation and background (can be supplied in an attachment):
See below; the flier to be stapled onto blue bags at vehicle check-in.

Fighting Illini, Fighting Waste

Please recycle:

Plastics, Aluminum, Clean Paper and Cardboard Products

Do NOT recycle:

Dirty Cardboard, Dirty Plastic, Dirty Paper Products, Glass

Fill up your blue bag and drop it off at an iSEE tent!

Get some free merch, a new blue bag, and help the environment!

Comments from consultation group (if any; these can be anonymous):