

# Waste Not Rot Not:

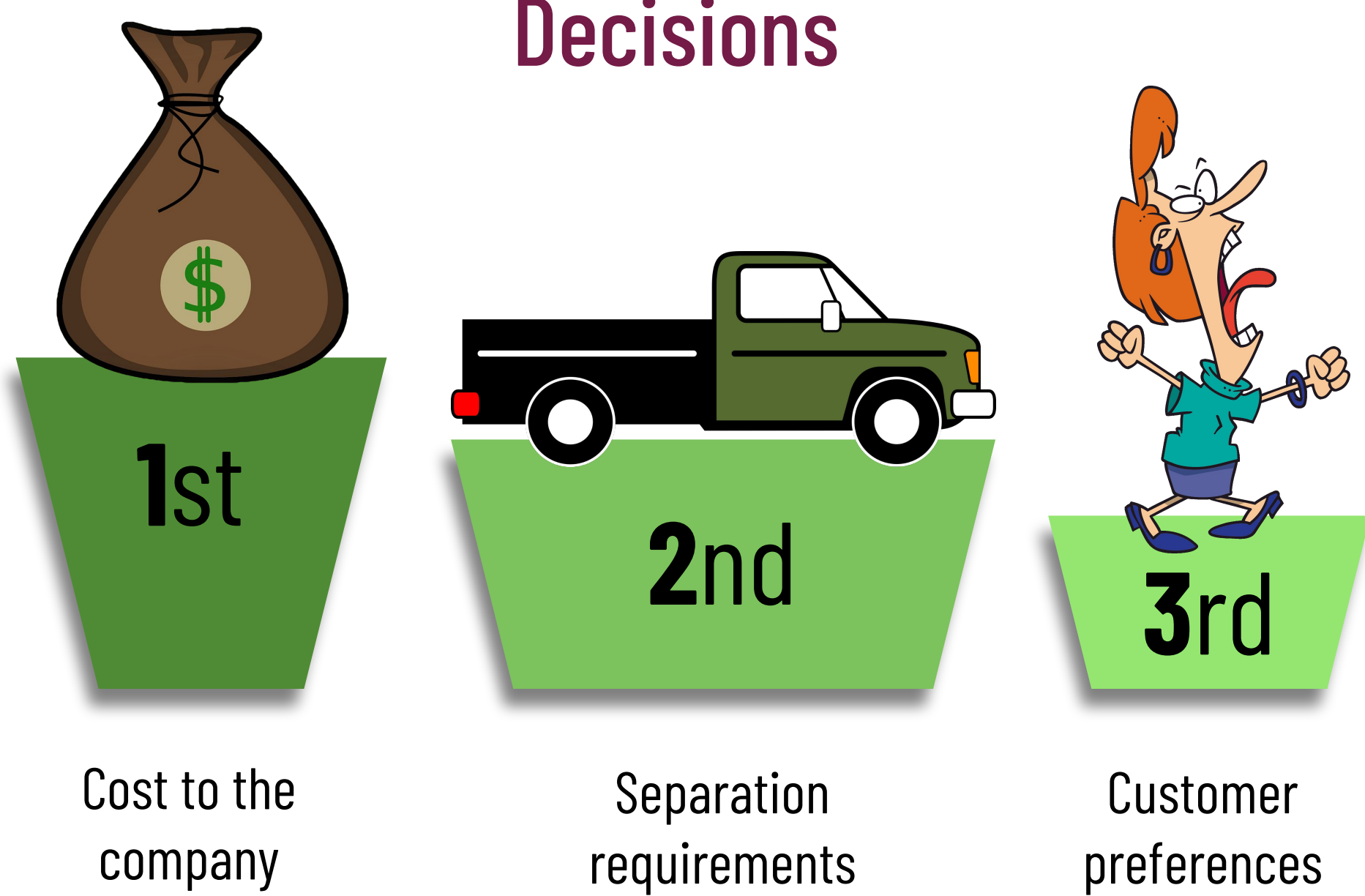


## Green Waste Diversion Potential for Tucson Landscapers

A study done in the Fall of 2021 revealed that the **Los Reales Sustainability Campus** in Tucson, AZ, home to Arizona's 3rd largest landfill, has shut down its green waste diversion program due to short and inexperienced staffing, leaving **no option for customers of Los Reales to divert their green waste**. Some of the greatest possible contributors to green waste diversion in Tucson are landscapers who, according to Los Reales, handle and dispose of thousands of tons of vegetative waste each year. This study aimed to discover trends in green waste disposal among Tucson landscapers, and to determine what influences their decisions regarding waste disposal.

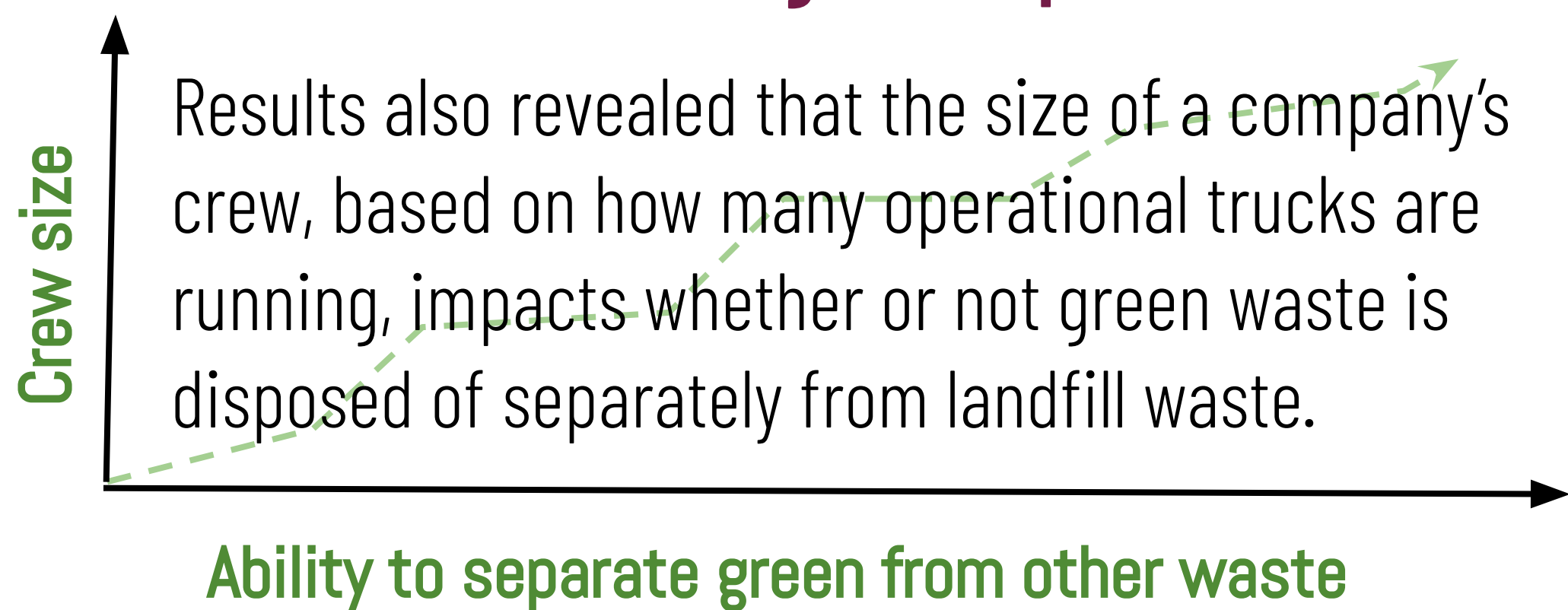
### Findings

#### Primary Reasons Cited in Waste Diversion Decisions



Preliminary findings indicate that the greatest barriers to green waste diversion for landscaping companies are the cost of waste diversion versus traditional disposal and the 100% green load requirements that green waste diversion sites, like Tanks Green Things, require.

#### Small vs. Large Companies



#### Potential for Change

When asked what would motivate business owners and administrators to change their waste disposal practices to divert green waste, **100%** of respondents that do not already dispose of green waste sustainably said that they would change the way they dispose of waste **if it made economic sense**. The ability of businesses to decline customer requests to remove debris that is not green increases the larger the company. Smaller companies were noted to have **fewer options for denying clients' needs**, according to both large and small landscape company owners in the study.



### Methods

Expert interviews of four Tucson landscaping firms of various sizes were conducted, where interviewees were asked the same questions about green waste handling practices so as to be able to compare responses and discover trends. Although more companies were contacted, only three responded to request a for an interview. Surveys regarding waste disposal habits were also sent to companies who participated in an interview.



Los Reales Landfill

Photo by Rebecca Sasnett, Arizona Daily Star. "Los Reales Landfill to become a zero waste 'sustainability campus'".

### Conclusion

Though the sample size of the study was relatively small, results indicate that the behaviours surrounding green waste disposal by landscapers in Tucson, AZ could be altered given the right economic conditions. Further research should aim to quantify the amount of green waste going to the Los Reales landfill from landscapers so that the City of Tucson might be encouraged to invest its resources into previously abandoned green waste infrastructure at the site, reducing the economic barrier.