



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item Meeting of June 12, 2004

DATE: May 20, 2004

SUBJECT: Adoption of the 2004 Arlington County Solid Waste Management Plan.

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

1. Adopt the Resolution in Attachment A, adopting the Arlington County Solid Waste Management Plan, including the base document that meets the State's requirements for solid waste planning and voluntary (local-option) goals proposed for the 20-year lifetime of the Solid Waste Management Plan.
2. Approve the proposed solid waste program enhancements for FY 2005, to be implemented following the Plan's adoption. If approved, the County will implement these program enhancements to the extent that existing funds can be reallocated. As a result, the County is not requesting appropriations for these enhancements.

ISSUES:

- 1) Do the local-option goals advance the County's waste-reduction and recycling goals in a cost-effective way?
- 2) Do the local-option goals provide adequate and equitable funding for the County's solid waste programs?

SUMMARY: Arlington County has developed a Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) in response to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) 2001 regulations requiring every city, county, or town in the Commonwealth of Virginia to develop a SWMP, or update an existing SWMP, by July 1, 2004.¹ The County's SWMP contains two major components: the base document and a set of voluntary (local-option) initiatives for solid waste management over the next 20 years. The base document meets or exceeds the solid waste planning requirements put forth by DEQ, including meeting a minimum recycling rate of 25 percent and using extensive public participation during the development of the SWMP. The voluntary (local-option) initiatives can be undertaken by the County Board at its discretion, and are subject to the annual budget process, feasibility studies, and County prioritization, giving the County the flexibility to implement new programs as resources become available.

¹ 9 VAC 20-130-10, et seq.

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: John Mausert-Mooney, Erik Grabowsky, Carl Newby (Acting, General Services), Scott MacDonald, Department of Environmental Services

BACKGROUND: The SWMP was developed over a 14-month period. In April 2003, the Arlington County Manager identified the Solid Waste Committee (SWC) of the Environment and Energy Conservation Commission as the citizen advisory committee for the SWMP, which conducted the community input sessions and assisted with outreach to key stakeholders. The County Manager also identified a set of solid waste issues that the SWC should consider in developing the SWMP. County staff researched and prepared background information on the issues identified by the County Manager to aid the SWC. The SWC reviewed these issues and put forth 50 recommendations for improving the County's solid waste management system over the next 20 years. Staff has distilled these recommendations into 14 program initiatives for the next 20 years, with four prioritized for the next five years.

DISCUSSION: The County's SWMP contains two major components:

1. Base document: The base document is structured to meet State requirements for solid waste planning. The base document includes the County's waste management strategy for the next 20 years; goals, objectives, and an implementation schedule; how the County plans to meet recycling requirements; a strategy for public education; updated demographic and waste generation projections; and a funding strategy for solid waste programs. Any major changes to this portion of the plan would require following the state's SWMP amendment process, while the implementation of the local-option program is wholly at the discretion of the County Board.

2. Voluntary (Local-Option) Initiatives: In addition to the state-required goals and objectives, the County identified additional goals and objectives it proposed for the next twenty years:

- Enhance the County's existing programs for waste reduction and recycling.
- Conduct the County's solid waste management activities in accordance with "best practices," minimizing air, land, and water pollution.
- Increase community participation in the County's waste management programs through education, compliance programs, and financial incentives.
- Develop strategies that adequately and equitably fund solid waste management programs.
- Expand solid waste planning capacity for program development and implementation.
- Continue the tradition of providing high quality customer service.
- Increase community involvement in the County's solid waste planning process.

Based on those local-option goals and objectives, the County has developed program initiatives for the next five years and for the balance of the twenty-year implementation period:

Voluntary program enhancements, first five years: The County has identified four voluntary (local-option) program enhancements that are prioritized for the initial five-year period following SWMP adoption. These include:

1. Improve Multi-Family and Commercial Recycling Programs – Expand capacity and resources for the mandatory multi-family and commercial recycling programs, dedicated to enforcement and administration of the multi-family and commercial recycling programs, as well as instituting enhancements to those programs
2. Solid Waste Planning Capacity – Expand solid waste planning capacity in the Solid Waste Bureau. Additional capacity would manage the feasibility studies proposed in the

SWMP and do program development and implementation in keeping with industry “best practices.”

3. Environmental Investment Fee Study – Conduct a comprehensive feasibility study on implementing a community-wide environmental investment fee (EIF), or solid waste generator fee. The EIF could fund community-wide solid waste programs such as litter collection, street sweeping, education, program development, and waste stream assessments. The study will help determine whether the revenues from the EIF could also be used to stabilize the tip fee at the Alexandria/Arlington Waste-to-Energy (WTE) Facility, so that all County users of the WTE Facility pay the same fee for waste disposal. This feasibility study would be conducted using the additional solid waste planning capacity.
4. Solid Waste Franchising Study – Evaluate implementing solid waste franchising (County contracts with private haulers) for multi-family and commercial properties in the County, as it now does with single-family and duplex properties. Staff proposes that the Board issue, at an advertised Board meeting in Fall 2004, the State-mandated five-year notice of intent to private haulers currently operating in the County. The County would then conduct a comprehensive feasibility study on implementing solid waste franchising over the next several years, involving all key stakeholders. Solid waste franchising could increase the County’s control of its waste stream, stabilize the tip fee at the WTE Facility so that all County users of the WTE Facility pay the same fee for waste disposal, and generate revenues for solid waste programs. This feasibility study would be conducted using the additional solid waste planning capacity.

Voluntary program enhancements, beyond five years: The County has identified additional program enhancements to implement in the period beyond five years. They are listed below, in no particular order:

- Study hazardous materials collection for qualifying residents with disabilities and small businesses, and implement, if feasible;
- Improve waste assessment and tracking to identify the most cost-effective programs to meet the County’s solid waste management goals;
- Enhance education and outreach for solid waste programs;
- Enhance enforcement and inspection capabilities for solid waste programs;
- Expand seasonal yard waste collection program to a year-round program;
- Implement yard waste ban, and build yard waste transfer station, if necessary;
- Study unit-based pricing structure for residential refuse collection, and implement if feasible;
- Evaluate enhancements to curbside recycling program (additional materials collected, single-stream recycling collection, etc.), and implement, if feasible;
- Study food waste collection program for residents and/or businesses, and implement, if feasible; and
- Enhance litter programs.

These program enhancements largely reflect the 50 recommendations put forth by the SWC. The actual implementation of these program enhancements is subject to the annual budget process, feasibility studies, and County prioritization. Four of the program enhancements

have been prioritized for the first five-year period following SWMP adoption (FY05 - FY09). The proposed implementation schedule for the initial five-year period is shown in Table 1 below.

The four initiatives proposed for the first five years were chosen based on an analysis of needed improvements in our present system and on benchmarking with other communities that are national solid waste leaders. In combination, these program initiatives would create a new source of funding for solid waste programs, give the County better control over its waste stream, and would expand the County’s capacity for planning, outreach, and compliance.

**Table 1
Voluntary Program Enhancements, First Five Years:
Implementation Timeframe**

Program Enhancements		FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10
1.	Environmental investment fee						
	Feasibility study						
	Implement						
2.	Franchising ¹						
	State-mandated 5-year notice						
	Feasibility study						
	Establish program administration						
	Franchise agreements						
3.	Solid waste planning capacity						
4.	Expand multi-family and commercial recycling programs						

¹ If the feasibility study for solid waste franchising indicates that franchising should be implemented, the County proposes to do so in FY10 (when the five-year notice is complete). The County assumes that at least two FTEs will need to be created in FY10 to facilitate implementation.

Staff is seeking County Board approval of these four program enhancements for FY 2005:

- initiating feasibility study for an environmental investment fee,
- initiating feasibility study for solid waste franchising,
- creating additional solid waste planning capacity, and
- enhancing enforcement capacity for the multi-family and commercial recycling programs.

The proposed schedule for implementing an environmental investment fee or solid waste franchising is subject to change based on the findings of the proposed feasibility studies, and giving the five-year franchising notice does not require the Board to implement franchising. Future program decisions will be brought before the County Board for approval as they are developed.

FISCAL IMPACT: Table 2 below summarizes the anticipated impact of the voluntary program enhancements proposed for FY 2005. Because the budget for FY 2005 is already approved, the County will implement some of the planning work for FY 2005 using a reallocated FTE and \$84,838 of the savings from the contracting out of the three remaining in-house curbside refuse

collection routes. Staff is working to identify additional existing resources that can be reallocated to start some of the Commercial and Multi-Family Recycling initiatives in FY 2005. Staff is not requesting appropriations for the enhancements proposed for FY 2005.

Table 2
Resource Reallocation for Voluntary Program Enhancements Proposed for FY 2005

Program Enhancement		Reallocated Positions	Personnel Costs*	Non-Personnel Costs*
1.	Environmental Investment Fee			
	- Feasibility study	0	\$0	\$35,000
2.	Solid Waste Franchising			
	- Feasibility study	0	\$0	\$0
3.	Solid Waste Planning Capacity	1	\$31,738	\$0
4.	Commercial and Multi-Family Recycling			
	- Expand enforcement and education capacity	0	0	\$18,100
Total		1	\$31,738	\$53,100

* These costs reflect half-year costs.