

Memorandum

To: Laura Blackmon, County Manager
From: Gayle Wilson, Solid Waste Director
Subject: STATUS REPORT – Transfer Station Siting Process and Parallel Investigations
Date: March 6, 2009

At the January 22, 2009 Board of County Commissioners meeting staff was directed to investigate possible alternative approaches, partnerships, and methodologies for solid waste disposal in consultation with the Solid Waste Advisory Board and other interested citizens, and to continue the investigation and evaluation of the two proposed West 54 transfer station sites. The following update of activities is provided:

Use of Existing Transfer Stations

One proposed alternative to construction of a new MSW transfer station in Orange County is to have waste collection vehicles haul their loads to existing private sector transfer stations in neighboring counties for an interim period or on a long term basis.

Activities completed to date:

- Gathered cost and operations data from each municipality and the County regarding their current collection operations and any planned changes.
- Determined "off route" times and cost estimates for each jurisdiction.
- Estimated cost of transporting each jurisdiction's waste from the end of routes to the current landfill, proposed West 54 transfer station site and to each of the three existing private sector transfer stations in Durham County. Included cost of additional vehicles and crew to meet collection service levels and proposed requirements.
- Reviewed NC DENR files to determine permitted disposal and transfer facilities in the surrounding counties that may reasonably be used for disposal of County MSW.
- Reviewed NC DENR permits and inspection records of each of the possible facilities.
- Interviewed owner/operators of each of three potential alternative transfer stations regarding their operations, capabilities and interest in Orange County waste.
- Traveled to each of three potential facilities along the anticipated route of collection vehicles and toured each facility to assess site issues, access and facility operations.
- Developed Transfer, Haul and Disposal cost model to evaluate the proposed West 54 transfer station sites and private sector options.

Activities to be completed:

- Meet with each municipal jurisdiction to review cost assumptions, data and results of analysis.
- Finalize analyses as needed and develop draft report for presentation of findings and conclusions.
- Meet with SWAB to review hauling analysis and develop final report for the BOCC.

Develop alternatives to landfilling.

As an alternative to landfilling consider the possibility of developing a waste-to-energy facility or other technology, including partnering with UNC or other interested parties.

Activities completed to date:

- Reviewed previous work by SWAB regarding waste-to-energy technical and economic feasibility.

- Initiated discussions with UNC staff regarding the potential for developing a waste-to-energy facility that would provide energy to Carolina North or fuel to the cogeneration plant at the main campus. A meeting has been scheduled with UNC on March 16th to further these discussions.
- Reviewed Orange County Voice proposals and identified areas or issues requiring additional clarification and/or detail.
- Invited OCV and other special interest groups to present their opinions/proposals at the March 5th SWAB meeting, (i.e., Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and Wheelabrator).
- Coordinated alternative technology investigation process (objectives and convening role) with SWAB.

Activities to be completed:

- Complete discussions with UNC to determine the applicability of a new waste-to-energy (WTE) facility and/or refuse derived fuel processing for the cogeneration plant.
- Follow up on various proposals and presentations by special interest groups as needed.
- Continue SWAB forums for additional discussions with groups suggested by OCV and others, and report findings and conclusions regarding alternative technologies.

Consideration of partnering with other jurisdictions to establish long-term solutions

Contact jurisdictions within geographic region to determine interest in developing a long-term solution to waste disposal, including landfilling or alternative technologies.

Activities completed to date:

- Initiated discussions with surrounding counties to determine potential interests in developing a regional approach to waste disposal.
- Reviewed previous regional partnering outreach efforts.

Activities to be completed:

- Seek informal or formal expressions of interest by regional jurisdictions.
- Continue dialogue with surrounding jurisdictions regarding opportunities to partner on solid waste management facilities and services.

Transfer Station Siting Process

Investigation and evaluation of proposed West 54 sites.

Activities completed to date:

- Submitted Environmental Assessment for Site 056 to the Orange County Planning Department on February 17, 2009. Orange County Planning Department submitted the EA to the State Environmental Review Clearinghouse (SCH) on February 19, 2009.
- Prepared preliminary draft of EA for the Site 759, but cannot be completed until access is granted for the site.
- Completed boundary survey for Site 056.

Activities to be completed:

- The State Clearing House (SCH) manages the EA review process. The primary purpose of the process is to notify potentially affected state/local agencies and the public of the proposed development activities in their jurisdiction/local area. The process offers a means for agencies with expertise and/or the public to review the environmental assessment/impact documents prepared for the proposed activity and offer comments regarding the adequacy/accuracy of the impact analysis. The end result of the process is to provide decision makers with the information to make an informed decision of the environmental consequences of their actions. The SCH

publishes availability of the document and circulates to state/local agencies and public for a 30 day review and comment period. After the 30 day period, SCH considers the comments received and advises appropriate action (i.e., EA information is adequate; EA satisfies a finding of no significant impact (FONSI); or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required). The County Planning Department then considers the comments received from the SCH and documents its findings (i.e. a FONSI or an EIS is required). The comment period for the Site 056 EA is from February 20 to March 20, 2009.

- Finalize scope of work for a flora and fauna survey and a Cultural and Archeological resources survey for Site 056 in accordance with the County Cultural and Archeological Survey Policy for Orange County Development Projects. Develop scope of survey for identification of wetlands, if required. The surveys will be completed once the comments from the SCH have been received.
- Complete property appraisal.

Landfill Contingency Plan

Investigation and evaluation of interim disposal options if landfill capacity is reached prior to completion of a transfer station.

Activities completed to date:

- Met with DENR to establish temporary transfer station permitting requirements.
- Developed costs for diversion of waste to private sector transfer stations.

Activities to be completed:

- Finalize temporary transfer station conceptual layout.
- Complete contingency plan report.

Citizens Advisory Board

Once a final transfer station site is selected begin establishment of citizens advisory board, including inviting representatives from the three Towns to participate.