Memorandum

To: Solid Waste Advisory Group

From: George Seiz, Carrboro Public Works Director
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Subject: Staff Suggested Priority Solid Waste Issues (revised)

Date: April 22, 2015

Towns and County staff were requested by the Solid Waste Advisory Board to prepare a list of solid waste issues and their relative priorities for consideration and discussion at the April 1, 2015 meeting. At the April 1 meeting the SWAG proposed several revisions/suggestions that are reflected in the memorandum below.

Guiding Principles

Your staffs have discussed and evaluated various topics and opportunities without an overriding concern or focus on political aspects and have tried to provide a more technical or industry professional viewpoint. Staffs have utilized to varying degrees and in a general sense the following standards/criteria in our issue discussions and have amended our list based on April 1 SWAG comments.

- Potential to reduce waste and/or increase recycling
- Other environmental impacts such as fuel usage, toxicity reduction, pollution prevention, etc.
- Cost and Cost Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Citizen understanding/user friendliness/complexity/equity
- Industry best management practices
- Innovation/Creativity
- Public Involvement, and
- Environmental Education and Outreach

Staff Suggestions/Priorities

Based in part on the above criteria and discussions from the April 1 SWAG meeting, staff has adjusted the following priorities and issues for SWAG consideration as short or mid-term actions, as amended by the SWAG. Staff is recommending the first 6 issues as short term

priority issues that are recommended to be pursued now and concurrently. Suggested timeframes are provided (taking into account current workload/staff capability).

1. Adopt funding mechanism (as necessary to allow the County to assess fees for FY 2015/16)

- Open-ended or longer term timeframe (closure on funding issue) is preferred by staff rather than an interim or short approval or recurring annual multi-jurisdictional approvals

Suggested Timeframe: Governing boards to agree on Option 2 – Solid Waste Programs Fee (single county-wide fee) before May 1. Fee approved in municipal budget ordinances to be effective July 1, 2015.

2. Adopt Formal Interlocal Agreement – By January 1, 2016

- Incorporate funding mechanism
- Waste collection would be responsibility of individual jurisdictions
- Include UNC-CH and UNC-Healthcare to the extent possible
- Assume long term relationship
- Include withdrawal provision
- Include amendment provision
- Establish citizen advisory function
- Establish fee increase limitations or municipal fee approval triggers
- Set new county-wide waste reduction goal
- Address future of SWAG
- Staffs to have substantive technical role

Suggested Timeframe: SWAG could prioritize discussion of Interlocal Agreement for upcoming meetings, beginning with the April 22 meeting. Target January 1, 2016 to have consensus draft ready for governing boards' consideration. This is a possible topic for November 2015 AOG meeting. Address county/municipal issues first and then incorporate UNC-CH and UNC-Healthcare.

3. Rural Curbside Expansion (implementation active upon adoption of Funding Option)

- 3 year phased implementation to begin in spring FY 2015/16

Suggested Timeframe: Consistent with fee option proposal rural expansion element county staff is currently planning and has incorporated into the FY 2015/16 proposed budget phase I rural expansion (of three year phasing) of curbside recycling with roll cart option. We anticipate that phase 1 implementation (cart distribution and collection to half of the parcels not currently being serviced curbside) by March-April 2016. Completed implementation for curbside recycling to all improved properties in the County is

estimated to be March-April 2018. County staff is initiating a routing study and data collection.

4. Development of Local Waste Disposal Facility

- Landfill or transfer station
- Minimize environmental and neighborhood impacts of siting
- Maximize waste reduction
- Generate revenue to fund facility operations and debt
- Reduced operating costs
- Consider proven alternative technologies as appropriate

Suggested Timeframe: Given the extraordinary cost and effort for hauling waste to Durham County disposal facilities (less so for Hillsborough), coupled with the time required to successfully site, design, permit and construct a local facility, staff believes it is necessary to begin the process as soon as possible. Staff suggests that preliminary discussions begin asap (spring 2015). Under reasonably deliberation and meaningful jurisdictional collaboration, it could take 3-4 years to plan and construct a transfer station. Deduct 1 year if a site search is not required. A landfill proposal could likely take a minimum of 6-7 years and a site search would be required.

5. Exploration and Implementation of cooperative operations with UNC-CH and UNC-Healthcare (initial explorations underway)

Suggested Timeframe: Staff is already engaged in this endeavor with UNC-CH and once the "low hanging fruit" has been evaluated and addressed additional opportunities will be explored. The evaluation of collaborative opportunities with UNC-Healthcare can be initiated over the remainder of 2015. Staff will provide periodic progress updates to the SWAG. A comprehensive technical assessment of opportunities may require the assistance of a consultant.

6. Secure Permanent Emergency Storm Debris Management Sites

- Larger site for extreme weather event in Northern Orange
- Replacement site for Millhouse Road site when park development begins

Suggested Timeframe: Staff will initiate evaluation of alternative sites. Suggested options to be presented to and discussed with SWAG in fall of 2015. The issue of a larger northern site will be the first staff priority as the current southern site is adequate until the future Millhouse Road Park property is ready for development.

Note: It is unlikely that staff can proficiently manage any more than the above priorities over the next 2-3 years. The SWAG can reorder the priorities from

among the above and below issues; however there is a practical limit to the number and complexity of projects staff can manage at one time. Not on this priority list but a previously identified BOCC priority is the modernization of Solid Waste Convenience Centers that is also to be managed within the 2-3 year timeframe.

7. Evaluation of Non-residential Programs (initial data gathering underway)

- Improve/expand non-residential collection programs
- Consider both wet (food waste) and dry (co-mingled recycling) materials
- Facilitate maximization of recovery from non-residential programs
- Consider alternative methods of service delivery
- Evaluate costs/benefits of programs
- Could be informed by waste characterization study

Suggested Timeframe: Comprehensive evaluation of non-residential recycling services will likely take up to 1 year and potentially involve the assistance of a consultant. A waste composition study is proposed and could take approximately 6 additional months. Following evaluation, staffs would develop recommendations for SWAG consideration. Further timeline would depend on subsequent SWAG recommendations and elected board decisions. Total timeline could be approximately 2-3 years.

8. Assess the Effectiveness of and Compliance with the Regulated Recyclable Materials Ordinance (RRMO)

- Make ordinance or enforcement adjustments as necessary

Suggested Timeframe: This item would require staff to develop a method of assessment and conduct the assessment over a period of time, possibly 1-2 years. Further timeline would depend on results of assessment, such as requirements for ordinance revisions, changes in enforcement strategies, etc. Total timeline could be approximately 2-2.5 years.

9. Consider Options for Providing Non-municipal Operated Waste Collection Services – i.e. franchising

- Reduce fuel usage
- Minimize costs
- Maximize access to services

Suggested Timeframe: Assessment of current non-governmental waste collection services and development of a recommendation for SWAG consideration could take up to 1 year. Further consideration by the SWAG leading to a recommendation to elected boards could

require another year or more. Depending on the final decision an additional 18 months for implementation would likely be required. Total time could be approximately 3-3.5 years.

10. Evaluation of Urban Curbside Program

- Collection frequency upon request by Towns
- Capacity for adding additional materials to recycling stream (ongoing)

Suggested Timeframe: An assessment of moving from weekly to bi-weekly (every other week) municipal curbside recycling services, including costs and other implications could be performed in approximately 6 months. Actual implementation of bi-weekly services could depend on budget cycle timing, timeliness to inform residents of a change, willingness of contractor to negotiate mid-contract and/or modify the remaining term on an existing collection agreement. It is desired and recommended to implement a change in frequency of collection to the contract upon contract renewal discussions. Currently, we are in the second year of a five-year term agreement for weekly curbside collection. Total time to implement could range from 1 year to 3+ years.

11. Residential Organics

- Assess feasibility and costs/benefits
- Could be informed by waste characterization study

Suggested Timeframe: An assessment of expanding residential organics collection, which would include a waste composition study, would take about 1 year and likely involve a consultant. Depending on the resulting staff recommendation to the SWAG and the subsequent recommendation to elected boards including time for public comment and input, another 1 year would be likely. Depending on the specific implementation (if recommended and endorsed by the boards) an implementation could take an additional 1-2 years. Total timeline to implement could range from 3-4 years.

12. Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) Waste Collection

- Assess feasibility and costs/benefits
- Could be informed by waste characterization study

Suggested Timeframe: Numerous evaluations, analysis and reports have been conducted by the various staffs over the past several years and another report could be completed in less than one year. A waste characterization study prior to considering PAYT would be recommended and can take about 6 months. It is estimated that another year could be spent discussing and debating among the SWAG as to what, if any, recommendation should be provided to the governing boards. If the boards agreed upon a particular PAYT methodology it is estimated that it could take 1-2 years to plan and implement the program simultaneously in all jurisdictions. Considerable attention to public education and outreach

would be required limiting other staff workload for that period. UNC-CH would also have an interest in any decision. Total time to implement could range from 3 to 4 years.

13. Develop strategy for measuring and tracking solid waste services

Suggested Timeframe: The staffs would discuss the various indicators, yardsticks and benchmarks available or necessary as relates to various programs and services. Staff would then consider the data collection methodology and reporting frequency that would be suitable. Establishing data collection and reporting protocols could be phased in, beginning with services/programs with the most interest. Initial discussions and data collection and reporting recommendations could take place within 6 months. Full broad-based program data reporting and monitoring could take up to 2 years depending on other workload and data objectives. Also, to have a meaningful evaluation of program performance and objectives it is desired to have data collection over a multi-year period. Total timeline to fully implement could take up to 2 years, however constantly changing or expanding programs and services would make this an ongoing and evolving activity.
Note: Staffs will prepare updated cost estimates for hauling waste to Durham disposal facilities compared to using a local facility within the next 2-3 SWAG meetings.

Long Term Issues

Staffs believe that some sort of technical advisory committee would be appropriate and necessary to explore and evaluate more intricate or longer term type issues or issues that are likely to be publically contentious. Alternatively, local government staff could provide this function once satisfactory progress is made on more short/mid-term priorities.

- Uses for closed landfills
- Alternative technologies
  - develop criteria/principals for evaluation
    - consider only proven
    - determine impact on recycling
    - evaluate risk
    - define local interests
- Evaluate and update solid waste ordinances
- Development of regional/multi-county cooperative relationships
- Biosolids

General

Timeframe - Most new program implementation, major current program expansions and all facility construction require multiple years to plan and implement. So terms such as short-term, mid-term and long-term may not be viewed by everyone through the same timeframe lens. For example, it may be suggested that expansion of rural curbside recycling is a short-

term action, but that action has been proposed as a three year phased implementation that will not be fully implemented until the fourth year.

Workload – Your staffs' capacity to plan and implement multiple programs and facilities is frequently limited given ongoing routine service provision and administrative obligations, in addition to other programatic and facility improvements and modifications that are continually in progress. Even the use of consultants requires close oversight and guidance. There are genuine limits to the overall staff capability at any one time if quality program performance, cost effectiveness and effective citizen education and outreach activities are desirable objectives. Nevertheless, your staffs are prepared to undertake the issues deemed priority by our respective governing boards.