



TO: Environmental Commission

CC: Alison Heatley, Interim Solid Waste Manager

FROM: Sarah Mason, Resource Recovery Manager

DATE: February 22, 2024

SUBJECT: Solid Waste Resource Management Plan Status Updates

The objective of the 2019-2023 Solid Waste Resource Management Plan (SWRMP) approved by City Council on October 5, 2020, is to provide a strategic approach to provide effective solid waste area services and programs to the community that meet the needs and desires of the community in a financially sustainable manner.

To that end, the plan outlines twenty-four recommendations over six areas: Residential, Commercial, Education & Outreach, Downtown, Diversion Facilities, and Funding.

An update on the current status of each of the recommendations within the 2019-2023 Solid Waste Resource Management Plan follows below. While many of the recommendations have been implemented or are currently being worked on, there are several recommendations that have not yet been initiated and are slated for consideration in future fiscal years. Therefore, while the general planning period of five years, 2019-2023, has passed, the recommendations of the plan continue to be relevant and are utilized to guide the work of staff.

As such, staff does not anticipate the start of a new planning effort to commence prior to fiscal year 2026. However, staff is seeking feedback on the progress to date and proposed plans for FY25. This timing aligns with several other parallel endeavors. One, the consummation of the effort to develop a new Materials Management Plan by Washtenaw County as required by the recent statutory revisions to Part 115 Solid Waste Management of the Michigan Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. Knowing the proposed priorities and goals of the County plan will ensure the City's plan is aligned with the County plan as required by the Michigan Department of Energy, Great Lakes and the Environment (EGLE).

Additionally, staff is anticipating the release of the final regional Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) by Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) in early March which will include grant opportunities for food waste reduction among other climate actions. This, combined with infrastructure spending at the federal level, is making a large amount of grant funding available for

solid waste programming for the first time in many decades. Postponing the start of an updated local solid waste planning effort until fiscal year 2026 will allow staff to prioritize the pursuit of available grant funding to support further growth of the programs recommended in the 2019-2023 SWRMP.

Below, the recommendations from the 2019-2023 SWRMP are grouped and copied in their entirety as found in the SWRMP (in italics), with a status update and proposed plans for FY25 following.

Residential Recommendations:

R.1. Implement year-round residential compost collection. Perform collection from December through March on an every-other-week basis from compost cart customers only.

Recommendation completed. Year-round compost collection for single family homes was implemented in January 2022. The service is offered monthly, generally, in the first week of the month in January, February and March. For Winter 2022, a total of 189 tons were collected over the three weeks of collection. This is right within the predicted range 110-274 tons in the SWRMP. Winter 2023 data is skewed due to the ice and snowstorms, collecting a total of 510 tons. However, January and February 2023 resulted in 151 tons which showed an over 50% increase over the 97 tons compared to January and February 2022. While not enough data is yet available to say with certainty, this increase tonnage may be an early indicator of increased awareness of the program.

The cost of this service was approximately \$49,000 for FY22 which is lower than the proposed cost of \$147,000 in the SWRMP. Reasons for the lower than anticipated cost include the monthly vs. every-other-week collection, and that as of, yet the City has not needed to rent additional compost trucks to cover this service. This could change in future years depending on equipment availability.

R.2. Contract for curbside textiles collection from single-family residences on a no-cost contract basis.

Recommendation to be considered in FY25.

R.3. Implement a limited bulky item collection program to collect large items not suitable for donation, reuse, or recycling which do not fit in the trash cart.

- ***Collection scheduled to occur once per month on a rotating schedule based on collection day and location within the daily collection zone.***
- ***Residents required to call the City to provide notification of the need for bulky item pickup, identify the type of waste being collected, and make payment. City to provide information on pickup services available for items that may be suitable for donation, reuse, or recycling.***
- ***Items collected proposed to include furniture, mattresses, rigid plastic children's play items (e.g., ride-on toys, Little Tikes / Playskool-type slides or playhouses, etc.), whole plumbing fixtures (e.g., sinks, toilets), appliances (excluding freon-containing appliances such as refrigerators and air conditioners), and carpet / padding (cut and secured in rolls). Bulky items are not proposed to include any***

extra loose or bagged / containerized household waste, construction or demolition materials from home renovation projects, tires, appliances containing freon, propane tanks, electronic wastes, or any items larger than can be reasonably lifted and loaded into a rear-load collection truck.

- *Establish a per-item collection charge to recover costs associated with this service, initially proposed to be \$25.*

Recommendation under way. The City requested pricing for residential bulk collection as an optional response for proposers as part of RFP #22-44 Commercial Solid Waste Franchise Collection. WM included three options and associated pricing for services to collect bulk items from residential households. This is a program that would be provided to customers on a periodic basis, and as such will require the identification of funding sources prior to implementation per the third funding recommendation of the SWRMP. Consideration and planning for implementation of such a service will occur in FY25/26.

R.4. Promote the use of existing drop-off options related to electronic waste (e-waste) and household hazardous waste (HHW) collection including the City's Drop-Off Station, Washtenaw County Home Toxics Collection Center, and retail outlets.

Recommendation completed and ongoing. This information is available on the City's website. Washtenaw County continues to provide services to residents for both those items, and in the past year, has opened a second HHW facility. The County has moved to an appointment system for their clean-up days and HHW drop-offs which has streamlined and improved the experience for those making use of the services.

R.5. Monitor Washtenaw Regional Resource Management Authority (WRRMA) activities related to e-waste and HHW and seek opportunities to partner with WRRMA to increase access to collection options for Ann Arbor residents, if this is an activity performed by WRRMA.

Recommendation completed and ongoing. In July 2021, City Council approved the City of Ann Arbor joining WRRMA as a constituent member. Due to the structure of the Authority, each existing member had to seek approval from their governing body to amend the articles and add Ann Arbor as a member. Therefore, it was March 2022 before staff were able to attend meetings as official members of the Board of WRRMA. Staff have remained aware of activities of the Authority, and to date WRRMA has not held any activities related to e-waste and HHW collections.

R.6. Conduct a competitive solicitation for curbside recycling cart collection to be performed by a contractor and determine whether to continue to contract with an outside vendor for this service or to instead consolidate service providers with the City operating as the sole collector performing all curbside cart residential collection of waste, recycling, and compost.

Recommendation completed via ITB #4623 Residential Customer Recyclables Collection, with a 5-year collection contract awarded to Recycle Ann Arbor effective July 1, 2021. The agreement has one two-year extension available.

Commercial Recommendations:

C.1. *In coordination with the City's Stormwater and Wastewater departments, develop and implement an ordinance requiring operating standards and reporting by restaurants and grease haulers to improve management of fats, oils, and grease (FOG) generated by restaurants. The ordinance should contain:*

- ***Restaurant requirements: Submit FOG management plans to the City identifying FOG handling procedures in place or proposed; site maintenance and cleaning procedures; the company providing FOG collection; and the location of any FOG container(s) utilized by the restaurant.***
- ***FOG hauler requirements: Submit periodic (quarterly or annual) reports identifying quantity of grease collected and disposition (reuse/recycling or disposal).***
- ***A fee to be paid by restaurants included in the ordinance to recover costs associated with ordinance implementation. An initial fee of \$100 per year is proposed, equating to approximately 3 labor hours per year allocated to each restaurant for monitoring and enforcement.***

Recommendation to be considered in FY25.

C.2. *Include specifications for commercial organics (compost) collection in the next commercial waste franchise procurement. Parameters for service are recommended to include:*

- ***Voluntary service for interested food-oriented businesses.***
- ***Requirement for a minimum of 2 organics collections per week from all participating businesses (with at least one of those collections occurring on a Saturday or Sunday).***
- ***Cart / container cleaning to be performed periodically by the contracted hauler.***
- ***Site review required to be performed by City and franchise hauler to identify feasibility of service due to space constraints, identify container location(s), review compost collection procedures and acceptable materials with the business, and confirm standard operating procedures to be implemented by the commercial property to maintain quality of organics and ensure proper site management.***
- ***Cost of collection to be paid by participating businesses based on selected container size, number, and collection frequency.***

Recommendation completed. RFP #22-44 for Commercial Solid Waste Franchise Collection was issued May 2022 and included in the scope of work a mandatory submission of pricing to provide food scrap collection from interested commercial businesses. WM was awarded the agreement and subcontracted with My Green Michigan to provide the compost collection service. However, frequency of service is decided upon by customer rather than having a minimum requirement.

C.3. Establish increased collection service during peak student move-in / move-out periods in May and August for multi-family properties served by the City within a designated student apartment zone. The increased service is recommended to include:

- **Collection of carts and property-owned dumpsters on Monday and Friday during designated weeks, with specific dates to be established by the City annually.**
- **Separate collection of mattresses, if a mattress recycling contract is secured.**
- **Coordinated reuse / donation collection occurring on the same days as added collections at select location(s) within the student apartment zone and/or in cooperation with area donation / thrift outlets providing pick-up services. This may be considered to supplement or to replace current services provided by RAA at the centralized collection area at Tappan and East University Avenues.**
- **Cost of collection to be paid by multi-family properties receiving additional collection services.**

Recommendation objectives completed with some variation of the recommendations proposed. Starting with Move Out 2021, the City began offering drop-off services at 2000 South Industrial to support the turnover in both spring and fall. The service includes accepting items for trash, recycling, and reuse. The service has expanded to include Styrofoam recycling and in fall 2023 with the support of a Washtenaw County Solid Waste Reduction sponsorship, and in partnership with MyBARC (Bay Area Recycling), piloted diverting mattresses for recycling.

In addition to these drop-off services, the City also provides several days of no-charge extra dumpster tips to those customers who call and schedule them. The days for extra tips include Mondays and Fridays around the busier weekends of the student turnover time periods in spring and fall.

To further address the annual ebb and flow of off-campus students, the City has engaged Iris Waste Reduction Specialists to lead and facilitate a community planning effort to foster partnerships and maximize communications to better recover materials for reuse.

C.4. Increase data availability and tracking of construction and demolition (C&D) debris as a precursor to establishment of requirements for diversion of C&D materials. Implementation is recommended to be phased:

- **Phase 1: Institute reporting requirements to track types and quantities of C&D debris diverted and disposed from permit-required C&D projects. Reporting requirements are recommended to be incorporated into the building and occupancy permit process(es) with a refundable deposit or bond to be paid and returned upon satisfaction of requirements.**
- **Phase 2: Utilizing data collected in Phase 1, and assuming adequate C&D processing and recycling infrastructure is confirmed to be available in the region, institute requirements for the development of a diversion plan and establish a targeted diversion percentage. Diversion plan requirements will also be required to consider environmental health factors, material testing results (e.g., for lead-based paint or asbestos), and site capacity for dumpster placement and material**

segregation. Determination of the diversion percentage target will be dependent on local infrastructure and quantities, but is initially suggested to be 50%. Phase 2 is recommended to be initiated 3 to 5 years after implementation of Phase 1.

Recommendation is under way with the support of the Circular Economy working group of the City's Environmental Commission. Work toward recommendations for recovering and diverting construction and demolition (C&D) materials began in the summer 2023. The Circular Economy working group has been performing exploratory research, building upon some existing work by Commissioners, other Michigan cities, the University and interns to flush out best practices and lessons learned from communities with existing C&D ordinances.

To date the group has interviewed both Madison, WI and Austin, TX; and plans to speak with King County, WA in the near future. Additional next steps include an internal meeting with staff from potentially impacted work areas to gain understanding of how a C&D ordinance might fit within existing workflows. Work on this recommendation is expected to continue into the next fiscal year.

- C.5. Perform ongoing inspection and enforcement of commercial properties to ensure compliance with waste and recycling collection requirements, including use of City collection services (performed by the City or its commercial franchise hauler) and participation in the City's recycling program. Initial enforcement is recommended to focus on education regarding ordinance requirements, on-site training and program set-up, and continuing follow-up support to secure participation prior to issuance of violations.***

Recommendation has not been implemented as additional staffing is necessary to implement. Staffing to support this level of outreach and enforcement may be suggested as in future budget requests.

- C.6. Consolidate service providers in the commercial sector, with the City's contracted commercial franchise hauler operating as the sole collector performing all commercial collection of waste, recycling, and compost and multi-family collection of waste where service cannot be provided by once weekly cart collection under the residential program.***

Recommendation has been superseded by the new Commercial Solid Waste Franchise Collection contract that includes refuse collection and offers a subscription-based compost collection service.

Education and Outreach Recommendations:

- E.1. Hire an individual with a background in community-based social marketing to direct all education and outreach activities.***

Recommendation objective was fulfilled through a new Education, Outreach and Marketing contract with the Ecology Center.

E.2 Procure a marketing and advertising firm with behavior change and community-based social marketing qualifications and experience to develop and implement a comprehensive outreach campaign and strategy. The strategy will include:

- **Audience identification**
- **Message development**
- **Media type and frequency**
- **Branding and creative development**
- **Rollout strategy and cost**

Recommendation objective was fulfilled through a new Education, Outreach and Marketing contract with the Ecology Center. Developing and delivering a Community-Based Social Marketing campaign is one of the five work areas under the new contract.

E.3. Establish a grassroots outreach team consisting of core City staff team members and supported by volunteers as available to perform direct contact outreach with residents. Outreach will be performed primarily during evenings and weekends and include door-to-door campaigns, presentations at community group meetings, and table/booth assistance at festivals and events Citywide.

Recommendation objective was fulfilled through a new Education, Outreach and Marketing contract with the Ecology Center. One of the five work areas of the new agreement is Community Events. The outreach work under the contract has preference given for providing outreach and education to priority audiences that represent the diversity within the community. Those audiences include but are not limited to non-English first language; underserved populations; multi-family housing; commercial businesses; transient populations (such as students, renters, and landlords).

Further, the outreach work includes a focus on priority messages which are action-oriented messages tailored to a community-wide or target audience that will help to engage and educate the community, in addition to increase community awareness and understanding of resource-recovery, proper disposal and the circular economy. Message topics include but are not limited to reducing consumption of single-use items; curbside cart placement and responsibilities; materials not acceptable in trash; recycling best practices; the recycling process, including what materials are accepted for recycling; and what is acceptable for composting, the purpose of compost, and explaining how compost is made.

E.4. Track education and outreach level of effort and activities on a monthly or quarterly basis and compare to collection tonnage metrics to measure effectiveness of education and outreach strategies. Supplement this data with periodic customer surveys on an annual basis or in conjunction with targeted campaigns to measure changes in customer awareness and participation in programs and services.

Recommendation objective was fulfilled through a new Education, Outreach and Marketing contract with the Ecology Center. Ecology Center prepares periodic and annual reports for each of the five work areas under the agreement: Community-Based Social Marketing;

Commercial Sector Education; Education and Outreach at Community Events; Multi-family Education and Outreach and Youth Education.

Downtown Area Recommendations:

D.1. Change downtown collection route driver schedules to enable Saturday and Sunday collections on a half-day basis, and mandate restaurants and bars to have Saturday and Sunday collection and minimum 4-day collection weekly. This will require amendment of contracts for operation of the City's transfer station and material recovery facility (MRF) (and compost facility, if organics collection service is implemented) to provide weekend receiving hours, as well as a memorandum of understanding with staff labor unions to change driver schedules.

Recommendation objectives completed with some variations of recommendation proposal. In July 2022, the City implemented Saturday collections for all downtown recycling containers and also provides collection as needed on Sundays in instances where it is warranted. For example, the City provides Sunday recycle collection on Sundays that precede Monday holidays when collections are otherwise shifted to ensure containers are emptied and do not overfill by going a two-day stretch.

For trash service, under the new Commercial Solid Waste Franchise Collection agreement, WM now provides Sunday trash collection at the same cost as other collection days. The City and WM have worked together with customers to add Sunday service to containers where the volume necessitates the Sunday collection. Additionally, while at this time no mandates have been implemented for minimum service schedules, the City and WM have worked together with customers to right-size collection schedules for containers where frequent overages are observed. The overage charge for an overflowing container increased significantly in the new agreement, which provides an appropriate cost incentive for customers to have adequate regularly scheduled collections.

D.2. Pursue consolidation of containers in the downtown area by:

- ***Planning and designing locations to place larger containers (6-8 cubic yard dumpsters and/or compactors) in the downtown area either in alleys or on City-owned properties to serve groups of businesses, removing carts from alleys to the extent possible.***
- ***Developing a cost-distribution formula to apportion costs for consolidated container services based on property type, size, usage, hours of operation, etc. and establishing the management structure for downtown services.***

Recommendation under way. The new Commercial Solid Waste Franchise Collection agreement awarded to WM includes provisions outlining the objective to consolidate containers in the downtown service area. This includes removing 96-gallon trash carts and adding those customers to shared dumpster and compactor containers and providing periodic recommendations to the City for further right-sizing of containers in the downtown area. The effort to consolidate customer containers is on-going.

D.3. Establish separate and discrete service arrangements within the DDA boundaries utilizing a single service provider for all waste-related services, including waste, recycling, and organics collection. This arrangement may be achieved through either the inclusion of separate downtown-area operating requirements and service costs within the commercial franchise agreement or through award of a separate contract for downtown-area services.

Recommendation objective achieved with a variation of recommendation proposal. Solid waste collection services in the downtown area have been streamlined; however, this was not achieved by having a single hauler for all services. Under the new Commercial Solid Waste Franchise Collection agreement, WM provides all trash collection downtown, both frontload containers (dumpsters and compactors) as well as carts. This is a consolidation of trash collection to one provider. The City continues to provide recycle collection downtown of both frontload containers and carts, thereby providing a single recycling provider for downtown. Compost services have not yet been widely adopted; however, they are provided by My Green Michigan as a subcontractor under the City's Commercial Solid Waste Franchise Collection agreement with WM.

Diversion Facilities Recommendations:

DF.1. Continue to participate in discussions with the County, WRRMA and/or other area communities related to strategies to develop a regional facility to replace the City's Drop-Off Station. The City is not recommended to lead these discussions, given the regional nature of the current facility and desire for any future facility to continue to serve the broader region.

Recommendation is underway. In December 2021, the City was awarded an \$850,000 grant from EGLE to support the design, engineering and construction of a new regional Drop-Off Station. Since that time, the City hired RRS to lead the site design and engineering of a new site. RRS completed a preliminary site design, including community engagement in June 2023. Prior to submitting the site plan to Pittsfield Township Planning Commission for consideration, the City and Recycle Ann Arbor began working together on the terms of an operating agreement for the new site as directed by City Council in a resolution passed July 6, 2023. Those discussions are ongoing.

Staff have also engaged OHM Advisors and their subcontractor, Stantec Financial Services, to perform a high-level life-cycle cost analysis (LCCA) for the for the major system components of the new DOS that includes evaluating the anticipated lifespan of the major components and estimating the anticipated costs to maintain, repair and replace. This work will inform the long-term funding options for the new facility, which is critical information for moving the project forward. Staff anticipate bringing proposed options to City Council later this year for their consideration.

DF.2. Continue to seek proposals for a new recycling processing contract with services to commence July 1, 2020. Encourage potential vendors to propose investment in and operation of the City's MRF as a processing facility.

Recommendation was completed. July 2020, City Council approved a services agreement and land and building lease with Recycle Ann Arbor for Transloading, Re-Equipping and Recyclables Processing at the City's local facility for an initial 10-year term with two 3-year extension options. December 2021, the re-equipped facility opened to receive recyclable materials collected by the City and its contractors for processing.

Funding Recommendations:

F.1. Pursue a ballot referendum to return the Solid Waste Millage to its original amount of 3 mils through a Headlee Override, thereby securing increased funding to support implementation of recommendations in the SWRMP and providing stability to the Solid Waste Fund as recycling costs continue to increase.

At present, this recommendation has not been pursued by staff.

F.2. Confirm the City's authority to impose a waste diversion fee or surcharge on residential and/or commercial customers to provide supplemental funding to offset shortfalls related to the costs of waste diversion programs and services. If the City is authorized to impose such a fee, implement the fee in the residential sector initially, given the current imbalance between revenues and expenses in the residential sector. To balance residential revenues and expenses under current conditions, this fee would be estimated to be \$5.56 per household per month (\$66.72 per household per year) in FY2020, resulting in additional revenue of approximately \$1,750,000.

At present, this recommendation has not been pursued by staff.

F.3. As programs and services are implemented which are used by customers on a periodic or limited basis, establish and implement service fees charged to users of the services to recover the added cost of service.

As noted in the discussion for recommendation R.3, for programs and services offered on a periodic or limited basis, service fees will be considered by staff in consultation with City Finance staff prior to program implementation.