



DATE: January 27, 2016
TO: ACWMA Board
FROM: Wendy Sommer, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Strategic Workplan 2020 – Midpoint Assessment

SUMMARY

The Agency's Strategic Workplan 2020 was adopted by the Board in July 2010. We are currently at the midway point of the implementation period, a good time to assess our progress and consider adjustments to the plan and goals. At the January WMA meeting, staff will present a high level progress report of key activities and propose a timeline for "recalibrating" the Plan.

DISCUSSION

Key Milestones and Related Activities:

Discards Management

2020 Milestone: Of materials landfilled, less than 10% are readily recyclable or compostable ("good stuff"). This milestone requires reduction from the 60% "good stuff" landfilled based on the 2008 Waste Characterization Study.

2015 Status: Percentages have fluctuated in the single-family residential sector over the past three years. The performance of business categories we measure have been steadier. The results in summary:

- Single family residential: 35% "good stuff" in the garbage
- General Retail, Light Manufacturing/Industrial and Office Professional: 18-20% range
- Restaurants: 50%
- Multifamily (from seven jurisdictions around the county): 45%

The total Alameda County landfill disposal in 2008 was 1,331,000 tons (landfilled both in-county and out-of-county). Using available data, we estimate approximately 1,050,000 landfilled tons for 2015, or nearly a 300,000 ton decrease from 2008. Changing composition and weight of the waste stream, as well as population growth and changes in economic activity make it difficult to pinpoint an absolute target tonnage that would represent success at reaching "less than 10% good stuff," but it is likely near 600,000 tons per year. So, if we assume we landfilled 1,050,000 tons in 2015 and want to get to 600,000 tons by the end of 2020, that would be a 450,000 ton reduction over five years, or 90,000 tons

per year (i.e. 960,000 tons in 2016, 870,000 tons in 2017, 780,000 tons in 2018, 690,000 tons in 2019, 600,000 tons in 2020). This is an ambitious but appropriate aspirational goal to keep.

Related Activities:

- **Mandatory Recycling:** After extensive research and analysis of conditions within our county and of experiences with mandatory measures in other jurisdictions, the Agency adopted a Mandatory Commercial and Multi-family Recycling Ordinance that is in place for more than 90 percent of the county. A systematic enforcement program has recently resulted in issuance of the first round of citations, after repeated notifications, warnings and offers of compliance assistance. An evaluation of the cost of having in-house ordinance inspectors is currently underway. Staff will return to the Board in March with results of the evaluation.
- **Diversion Metrics:** Extensive year-round sampling of residential and select commercial garbage setouts in 2013, 2014 and 2015 have not revealed the steady progress towards “less than 10% good stuff in the garbage by 2020” that we have hoped for. The bright spot is that an ever growing percentage of households have discarded little or no “good stuff” in their trash (growing to approximately 25% of single family households in 2015), but this burgeoning model behavior has been offset by a large group of “wasters.” Overall landfill tonnages have been declining, even during the economic recovery, but measurement of “good stuff in the garbage” for self-haul, debris box and overall commercial trash has not yet been thoroughly addressed.
- **Franchise Task Force:** An extensive, extended effort to find consensus among member agency representatives on desirable common elements of franchise programs, policies and practices produced very modest results, including recommended standardized hauler reports.
- **Advance Disposal Fee:** The original plan was to impose fees on hard-to-recycle, hard-to-compost, hazardous and litter prone products at retail stores as a way to send a price signal that these types of products are costly to society. After thorough analysis, implementing this approach was deemed not practical given the very narrow product types that would be eligible for the fee and the costs to administer the program.
- **Facility Investment Decisions:** Staff has continued to monitor the fluid and ever-changing aspects of local materials processing capacity. At this point in time, it appears that there are no significant gaps requiring public intervention.
- **Source Separated vs. Mixed Waste Processing:** So far, the overwhelming program focus throughout the county has been on source separated diversion of discards as opposed to mixed waste processing. Expectations are for this to continue to be the primary focus of member agency and countywide programs.

We are currently not recommending any major modifications to the Discards Management 2020 milestone and activities, with the exception of potentially employing ordinance inspectors in-house (pending results of the evaluation).

Product Decisions

2020 Milestone: Use ‘sustainability filters’ to influence decisions about what to manufacture, offer for sale, or purchase, to dramatically affect the quantity of and the options for managing the 530,000 tons of hard-to-recycle or hard-to-compost materials originating in Alameda County that were landfilled in 2008. The Board adopted seven ambitious targets, listed in Attachment A.

2015 Progress:

We have made some accomplishments thus far, especially as a result of the reusable bag ordinance that was passed in 2012. Since 2014, the ordinance has reduced the use of paper and plastic bags by more than 70 percent.

Unlike Discards Management programs, we will be recommending changes to the Product Decision Targets. After several years of work developing and implementing the Target projects, we have enough information to assess our progress, advancing and developing new objectives where we have achieved success, and course-correcting or evolving as needed to ensure we are working toward achievable goals with meaningful impacts. Staff is developing criteria that can be used to evaluate each target. The criteria will be a decision-making tool that focus on Agency priorities and take into account factors within and outside our control, such as our level of influence, available budget and receptivity among our target audiences. Next month we will return with proposed criteria, seeking Board input and approval that the criteria are appropriate to apply when evaluating existing projects or new concepts under consideration. We will present our recommendations on adjustments to the Targets for Board approval in March.

Revenues and Reserves

The Strategic Workplan identified the need for in-county compost facility capacity and the importance of diversifying revenue sources. Organics Processing Development (OPD) Reserves were established to provide funding to support compost facility development. Currently there are at least two composting facilities being developed in-county with private funds, and the anaerobic digestion facilities at EBMUD are being expanded. Our reserve funds do not seem to be necessary to directly fund these facilities. Staff will present criteria for spending part of the organic processing reserve in February.

We have been very successful in diversifying our funding sources. In 2010, less than 6 percent of Agency funding came from sources other than landfill tonnage fees. The creation and success of the Energy Council, Prop. 84 water grants and Benchmark fees have boosted that percentage to more than 50 percent. It is essential to note that the external funds have a large pass-through component and that Energy Council funds and external grants are multi-year contracts. However, these funds have sustained four FTEs per year while we continue implementation of programs without using ratepayer funds. A comprehensive discussion on revenues and projections will occur in February.

General Communication

In addition to programmatic progress, the Agency's communication team has performed the following to support the Strategic Workplan 2020:

- Developed Ready Set Recycle as our primary method of incentivizing and communicating with residents about increasing recycling through existing collection services.
- Included behavioral science principles and strong visuals in campaign messaging to improve effectiveness.

- Added community outreach grants to expand our reach into underserved communities and increase food-scrap recycling participation.
- Developed the benchmark report to communicate progress towards achieving the new waste diversion goal.

In addition to coordinating with Member Agencies and other local stakeholders such as water utilities, StopWaste collaborates with state and federal agencies as well. The work of these partners is important to consider as we consider any Strategic Plan updates so that we can collaborate where possible to be efficient with resources, and so that public and business audiences aren't confused by receiving multiple, conflicting messages.

Below is a schedule for upcoming meetings related to the Strategic Workplan Assessment:

- February 11 – P&A and P&O Committees and Recycling Board: Discussion of project evaluation criteria for PD Targets and OPD Reserves
- February 17 – WMA: Presentation and discussion of revenue sources and projection. Presentation of project assessment criteria and initial approach for PD Targets and Organics Processing Development Reserves
- March 10 – P&A and P&O Committees and Recycling Board: Presentation and discussion of PD Targets recalibration and recommendations
- March 23 – WMA: Adoption of adjusted PD Targets. Decision whether to employ in-house inspectors
- April 27 – Joint WMA/EC/RB: FY16/17 informational Budget presentation, incorporating adjusted programs based on Board decisions in the previous months

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information only.

ATTACHMENT A

The following product decisions targets were approved by the Boards at the end of 2011:

1. **Waste Prevention:**

A. Institutional Food Service/Commercial Cafeterias

Institutional kitchens and high volume food service operators located in Alameda County that participate in technical assistance or other support services from the Authority, reduce food and other inputs by an average of 25% or more from an established baseline.

B. Reusable Transport Packaging

90% of businesses in Alameda County with appropriate shipping and receiving circumstances are utilizing reusable transport packaging when economically advantageous.

2. **Household Hazardous Waste:**

A. HHW Alternatives

90% of stores that sell products destined for HHW facilities will stock and promote non-toxic/less-toxic HHW alternative products.

3. **Recycled Content:**

A. Bulk Compost

90% of permitted landscape projects in Alameda County use locally produced or sourced compost.

B. Bulk Mulch

90% permitted landscape projects in Alameda County use local, recycled mulch.

C. Building Materials

90% of building material supply centers will stock and promote recycled content building materials that support local green jobs.

4. **Hard To Recycle:**

A. Institutional and Commercial Food Service Ware & Packaging

90% of customers (institutional and commercial) with separate organics collection purchase and use readily recyclable/reusable/compostable food service ware and packaging.

B. Packaging Life Cycle Analysis and Recyclability Labeling

90% of Alameda County brand owner/manufacturers will incorporate life-cycle metrics consistent with the Global Protocol on Packaging Sustainability into their packaging design process to reduce the environmental impact of their packaging, utilize accurate recyclability labeling which is compliant with the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) Green Guides, and where possible, use the Sustainable Packaging Coalition's (SPC) How2Recycle label.

C. Single Use Plastic Bags

Single use plastic bags are strongly discouraged from distribution in retail stores.