



**DATE:** February 9, 2017  
**TO:** Programs & Administration Committee  
**FROM:** Pat Cabrera, Administrative Services Director  
**BY:** Meghan Starkey, Senior Program Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Waste Characterization 2017: Contractor Recommendation

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## **SUMMARY**

As part of the FY16/17 Agency budget, the Waste Management Authority approved funding for a waste characterization study. This type of study identifies predominant materials in the current waste stream and changes over time, supporting the Board-adopted guiding principle of collecting data for the purpose of making informed decisions. The results will be used by StopWaste and member agencies to help refine programs and evaluate progress towards long-term goals. Staff issued an RFP in November, 2016, and is recommending selection of SCS Engineers to conduct the study for a total of \$347,000.

## **DISCUSSION**

Similar to past studies, the 2017 Waste Characterization Study methodology will focus on physical sampling by hand-sorting and weighing materials, visual sampling to estimate material weight for loads not suitable for sorting and weighing, and additional data collection from haulers. As in previous studies, the 2017 study will break down the results in five generator sectors/delivery methods: single family, multifamily, commercial, roll-off and self-haul. The study period is calendar year 2017, with results available early 2018.

The last study was conducted in 2008 as a prelude to the 2009 strategic planning process. While the basic approach is similar, the study has been scoped with several modifications, which offer significant cost savings over previous studies.

- Results from the benchmark study will be used to estimate material quantities for the single family and multifamily sectors.
- The number of materials sampled will be cut in half, focusing primarily on the Agency's target materials (readily recyclable materials).
- The study will be conducted on a countywide basis only, rather than for each member agency.

The primary reasons for countywide level only are that the benchmark study provides more relevant data to the member agencies and that past studies have shown no significant statistical difference between the individual member agencies and the countywide results. Since sampling for an individual jurisdiction costs up to \$50,000 extra per jurisdiction, for the reasons outlined above, staff does not believe the extra work is warranted. Member agencies were offered the option to “add on” to this contract, so that if they wished a characterization study for their own jurisdiction, they could pay only for the cost of additional sampling, and get a study at a much lower cost than they could otherwise. However, member agency staff chose not to take advantage of this option, since they will be able to rely on countywide numbers and benchmark data, or conduct studies on their own.

An additional change is that the study will also sample post-processing residuals at Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs). As more Alameda County material is sent over processing lines, it is important to understand the composition of what is not recovered through these facilities.

Staff issued an RFP in November 2016. Three firms submitted proposals: SCS Engineers, Cascadia Consulting and Louis Berger. Cost proposals ranged from a low of \$297,500 (Cascadia) to a high of \$464,000 (Louis Berger). Staff evaluated all three proposals and interviewed proposers, and determined that SCS offered the best mix of responsiveness to the RFP, expertise, methodology and value.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Programs & Administration Committee recommend to the Authority Board to authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract with SCS Engineers for a total of \$347,000.