

Rhode Island Solid Waste Management Plan Advisory Committee Survey
May 21, 2013

1) What do you hope this plan will accomplish? What will be different/better once the plan is implemented?

Most Frequent Themes

- Extend the life of the landfill
 - Do so with a particular emphasis on recycling and composting
 - Establish a clear process for accomplishing goals and policies, and continually evaluating alternatives, measures of success, new technologies, etc.
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- “I hope this plan will assist the state with a vision on how to reduce the amount of valuable resources we are sending to the landfill. Great work on the 2035 Vision. Look forward to learning more.”
 - “Provide a cleaner vision and strategic plan for waste disposal, recycling and diversion to extend life of central landfill.”
 - “Provide a forum for discussion with the Town of Johnston as the host community so that the town can also plan for RIRRC reuse in long-term (22yrs). Provide understanding for host community for implications of anaerobic digestion (as a means of increasing land fill capacity).”
 - “Strategy for sustainable solid waste management systems over life of central landfill. Better informed, engaged, and functioning constituency participating in solid waste management process. Better systems and infrastructure to accomplish solid waste management goals.”
 - “Identify actions by RIRRC/DEM/General Assembly to establish priorities for solid waste management for RI. Set ambitious goals for waste diversion/recycling/composting efforts along with source reduction and reuse operations and policies. The plan needs to also consider practical processes for reviewing policies and decisions to be aligned with declared priorities.”
 - Extend the life of the landfill. Increase recycling and diversion. Develop strategies for managing organics.”
 - “A truly sustainable strategy for waste management for the state. The new plan should have a strong focus on new technologies and resources for communities on evaluating.”
 - “Make the producer of trash pay, including households, and thus increase separation of recyclables. Future revenues - Include opportunity costs in fees in waste management.”
 - “Clearly map the strategy to achieve the plan goals; Define goals and measurements; Provide a process for continuous review of alternative technology; BMP’s for municipalities/commercial generations.”
 - “ID clear strategies for extending the life of the landfill; ID the disposal options that will be available to the state post-Phase II; Set the path for the evaluation of those options.”

- “As a whole we are missing the boat locally and nationally regarding composting and the ability to extract a great deal from the landfill. Very enthused to see this on the horizon.”

2). What data/information do you feel is missing?

Most Frequent Themes

- Results of a Waste Characterization Study
 - More data on economic analysis, financial impacts, commodity markets, etc.
 - Information on new technologies
- “It will be helpful to get a copy of the presentation to review in more detail (financials, etc.). It would be helpful to hear if you think a Waste Characterization Study will be completed soon. It would also be more helpful to get more info on composting.”
 - “Won’t know until the draft SWMP is reviewed!”
 - “Renegotiation of the host community agreement (I believe the current agreement expires in the next 5 years) as one of the fiscal impacts.”
 - “Waste Characterization (update); Regional economic analysis of diverted waste streams and recycled commodities; Detailed modeling of scenarios/alternatives.”
 - “Methane gas generation/capture and sources of this gas. Waste characterization study for residential vs. commercial waste. Overview of municipal policies currently in place and how that has affected waste generation/diversion. Energy/water usage at the entire RIRRC facility. Historic commercial tipping fees, and overview of commodity market fluctuations for our captured recycling.”
 - “Exploring WTE and other non-landfill options. Exploring organics management (i.e. anaerobic digestion).”
 - “As noted above, resources and info on newer commercial technology.”
 - “Markets for recyclables geography/demand/price/development for local economy; who does pay and how is it working?”
 - “Population growth for region; Glossary of alternative diversion/processing technology; Financial projections based on varying inbound volumes; Most recent SWMP.”
 - “Better waste composition data.”
 - “Info regarding rumored composting facility near landfill. Is this part of the plan associated with RIRRC?”

3). Beyond the advisory committee, who else needs to be involved (groups and individuals)?

- “I recommend getting a diverse group of stakeholders involved. Similar to the Social Equity Advisory Committee for the Sustainable Communities work. In light of the fact there is a 20 year timeline estimate for the landfill, there is a great opportunity to get youth throughout RI involved.”
- “Not sure there are others that need to be involved at this time.”
- “Johnston Town Council; Pam Sherrill, Johnston Town Planner”
- “Sustainable Communities; Curt Spalding (EPA Region 1); Building code and health code representatives to address issues of commercial/multi-family facilities (waste storage).”
- “Amelia Rose, Environmental Justice League amelia.rose@ejlri.org; Trish Jedele, Conservation Law Foundation tjedele@clf.org”
- “Get input from other states, countries, and regions regarding other technologies and solutions to waste management.”
- “Major business groups: tourism/hospitality Myrna George (South County Tourism), Greater Providence CoC, Dan Baudoin Providence Foundation, John Muggeridge Fidelity; Citizens and residents.”
- “Individuals/representatives involved in composting currently. Will forward some names and suggestions.”

Additional Comments from Bob Vanderslice, Department of Health

I think we have a real opportunity to address some of the issues facing solid waste management in a way that contributes to the health of RI residents.

With respect to the public forums that are planned for the next year:

- I advise against holding any public forum in which the speakers and decision makers at the front of the room look appreciably different from the people in the audience. I encourage you to meet with local community leaders and invite them to help lead or facilitate these meetings.
- I encourage you to take whatever action is necessary to try and achieve an audience that is representative of the community you are visiting.
- If your public forums consist of a bunch of white guys preaching to different communities across the State, you need to reconsider whether you are doing what you have set out to do.

How do we use community input to create a plan for achieving the goal of greater composting and recycling?

- **Public Health perspective.** Greater composting and organic (paper, cardboard, etc) recycling can enhance urban agriculture and community gardening, reduce waste that contributes to climate change, etc. Community gardening can enhance social cohesion and contribute to community health.
- **The challenge of obtaining community input.** The people on the Advisory Committee are generally not experts on issues of composting and recycling, and may not necessarily provide guidance that will lead to creative or “envelope-pushing” solutions. The RRC's emphasis on practical solutions means that the solid waste guideplan will reflect the considerable knowledge of RRC staff, but may overlook novel means to achieve results that are deemed impractical from the perspective of RRC management. Something deemed impractical by RRC might be very practical if broad-based community support existed for innovative community-based solutions.
- **Resources to tap.** The RI Department of Health currently provides eight community groups with \$100,000/year for 3 years (\$2.4 million total) for community-based initiatives. Three of these grants include activities related to community gardening. These grantees are newcomers to the world of community gardening. In contrast, Southside Community Land trust and others have an established history that includes ventures that have ebbed and flowed over time. Their input would be valuable, as would input from Greg Gerritt, who organized a composting conference.

At the other end of the spectrum, RRC's desire to encourage ancillary industries to make use of the considerable volume of recycled materials (cans, paper, glass, etc.) at RRC should be of interest to a broad range of groups and EDC. This could have a direct tie in with Sustainable Communities. RRC understands the need for stable markets for recycled materials, and the opportunities RRC's recycled materials provide. Is there a way for RRC to pique the interests of the business community/EDC and engage the wide-range of groups interested in improving our economy to participate in guide plan development around recycling?