

# Executive Summary

**P**lanning for municipal waste management in Cumberland County has occurred in some fashion for nearly 40 years. While many of the previous plans were exercises in theory, current efforts have produced results that are more tangible. Most recently, the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act of 1988 (Act 101), placed upon a county the responsibility for securing sufficient disposal capacity for its waste through contractual commitments with landfills or other processing facilities. Additionally, it required a county to demonstrate to what extent it could feasibly attain the state's recycling initiative. Thus, in 1990, in accordance with the provisions of Act 101, Cumberland County set forth under new and interesting guidelines to develop a ten-year plan for the management of Municipal waste generated within its boundaries.

Act 101, for the first time, shifted the authority for Municipal Waste Management to the County. This transfer of authority away from the municipalities was intended to give the County the ability to implement the recommendations developed in the planning process. A Solid Waste Advisory Committee comprised of representative stakeholders including individuals from all classes of municipal government, select businesses and the waste and recycling industry provided input. The final Plan was approved by the municipalities and by the Board of County Commissioners and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. (PADEP)

The Plan provided numerous benefits to Cumberland County. By securing disposal capacity in professionally operated state of the art landfills, the County ensured its citizens fair and equitable disposal costs and increased protection from future potential environmental liabilities. The licensing and subsequently the registration of waste transporters reduced the occurrence of illicit dumping in the County thus enhancing public health and safety. Its combination of mandated and voluntary recycling initiatives conserved valuable natural resources.

A series of revisions have occurred since the approval of the first Plan. Most have been minor in scope and analysis. This current project will serve as the most in-depth review of waste management and recycling practices in Cumberland County since 1990. This update evaluates Cumberland County's ability to implement and the effectiveness of the existing Plan. Based on those findings, certain components

were revised and programs were altered to compliment the current regulatory climate and the economic resources of Cumberland County. The document outlines the step-wise process from fact finding through analyses to final recommendations. It also provides a schedule by which the revised Plan must be implemented.

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## ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

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The Cumberland County Municipal Waste Management Plan uses a series of fundamental components to evaluate the current solid waste management practices and behaviors as well as to establish future feasible improvements.

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### WASTE STREAM ANALYSIS

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The Waste Stream Analysis includes an inventory of waste stream generators, and an analysis of waste content. National and regional studies and trends are used to analyze the local waste stream, its composition and to calculate future disposal and recovery rates. Finally, projected population and employment increases are used to derive future solid waste management capacity needs.

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### WASTE HANDLING AND DISPOSAL

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The Waste Handling and Disposal component includes an inventory and description of the County's municipal waste collection programs for residential, commercial institutional and government entities. An assessment of the adequacy of collection programs for the County's current and future population is included. This component also contains a detailed inventory and description of current disposal programs. Each disposal facility is recorded along with its ownership, location, and capacity. Assurances of available capacity for the ten-year planning period are required within the Waste Handling and Disposal element. An examination of alternative disposal and processing methods are explored.

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### RECYCLING AND WASTE MINIMIZATION

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The Recycling and Waste Minimization component begins with an inventory of the waste recycling programs available within Cumberland County. Composting programs and yard waste management services are also outlined. The Recycling and Waste Minimization component contains an assessment of the County's actual overall attainment of the statewide goal of a 35% recycling rate. Finally, this component highlights future potential enhancements to County and/or municipal programs.

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### PUBLIC AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION

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The Public Awareness and Participation component includes direct involvement from a diverse group of stakeholders throughout Cumberland County. Municipal

officials, the general public, business owners and private sector representatives from the waste and recycling industry offer perspectives and opinions on the adequacy of current services and a vision for the future.

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### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The final component of the plan is the Implementation Strategy, which brings together the findings and recommendations of the planning process into an action plan. The Implementation Strategy describes the resources, tools and timeframe to achieve the goals of the Municipal Waste Management Plan.

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### PLAN ORGANIZATION

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The Cumberland County Municipal Waste Management Plan is comprised of eleven chapters and eleven appendices. Following is a brief description of their contents.

- **Chapter 1** discusses Cumberland County's current waste stream characteristics, reported and estimated waste quantities and material types, and projections of the waste stream over the next 10 years. The chapter also examines general demographic data such as population and housing densities, urban and rural elements, economic conditions and county characteristics that may influence waste collection, waste disposal, and type of materials disposed of over the next 20 years.
- **Chapter 2** documents the current collection and disposal practices throughout the County. It identifies transporters of different types of municipal waste. It also provides data on the ultimate disposition of various Cumberland County municipal waste components. Lastly, it discusses the degree to which Cumberland County competes for disposal capacity with other entities.
- **Chapter 3** projects the future waste generation and disposal capacity, which will be required by Cumberland County for the next decade. It presents legal issues related to flow control and capacity assurances. It also discusses the consideration given to the hierarchy of current and future available waste management technologies during the request for disposal capacity process.
- **Chapter 4** presents the overall performance of recycling programs currently operating throughout Cumberland County. It compares the County's efforts to similar programs implemented in other areas of the United States. It illustrates strengths and weaknesses and makes recommendations for future recovery.

- **Chapter 5** offers the analysis and reasoning behind selections made during the planning process for a comprehensive waste management system in Cumberland County. It provides economic and environmental benefits of various options. It also offers a description of anticipated gaps in waste management as well as potential business opportunities.
- **Chapter 6** presents the results of Cumberland County’s request for disposal capacity. It subsequently identifies the names, locations and types of facilities that opted to reserve capacity and to be designated to receive Cumberland County’s municipal waste over the next 10 years.
- **Chapter 7** identifies the agency that will assure that the final recommendations of the plan are carried out according to the implementation strategy. This section describes a variety of organizational structures considered including the advantages and disadvantages of each. It also offers a sample operating budget that illustrates the base financial needs of the agency to achieve the programs outlined in the plan.
- **Chapter 8** discusses the disposal, composting and recycling facilities, equipment and programs currently owned and operated by public sector organizations in Cumberland County. In addition, it speculates on the extent to which future public facilities might be developed.
- **Chapter 9** explains the legal documents necessary to implement and enforce specific elements of the approved Cumberland County Municipal Waste Management Plan. These include contracts, licenses, ordinances, and others.
- **Chapter 10** outlines how the elements of the Plan will allow for a smooth transition from any current and potentially conflicting programs to those newly recommended.
- **Chapter 11** describes the relationship between the Cumberland County Municipal Waste Management Plan and private sector owned and operated facilities located both within and outside of the County.
- **Appendix A** contains basic words and acronyms used throughout the document and their meanings as they relate to solid waste management.
- **Appendix B** contains the contract provisions required of all facilities, which agreed to reserve disposal capacity for Cumberland County during this planning period.
- **Appendix C** offers a simplified format and the necessary documents to add a facility and additional secured capacity during this planning period.

- **Appendix D** includes any and all County ordinances necessary to implement the provisions of the Cumberland County Municipal Waste Management Plan.
- **Appendix E** contains the registration forms, which must be submitted by transporters desiring to collect and transport municipal waste and/or recyclables in Cumberland County.
- **Appendix F** presents the official delegation and transference of duties from Cumberland County to the Cumberland County Recycling & Waste Authority. The document delineates the powers, responsibilities and financial commitments of the two parties.
- **Appendix G** provides the official resolution of the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners to approve and implement the recommendations contained in the Plan.
- **Appendix H** presents a list of background publications referenced and other tools used to justify assumptions and other recommendations made in the development of the Plan.
- **Appendix I** documents the degree of public participation utilized in development of this Plan. It includes a combination of presentations, handouts and meeting minutes. It shows both citizen and private sector involvement in development of the future vision of waste management in Cumberland County and the final adoption of the Plan.
- **Appendix J** contains the disposal capacity agreements executed with each facility.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the development of the Cumberland County Municipal Waste Management Plan in 1990, noticeable improvements and advancements in waste management, including recycling and waste diversion, have resulted. Therefore, overall, little to no change is anticipated in Cumberland County's approach to these issues.

## NOTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The majority of Cumberland County's citizens and businesses act to manage municipal waste in an environmentally responsible fashion. Many residents have access to waste collection opportunities.

More than 90% of the residents in the County have access to curbside recycling collection. The level of services offered may vary considerably from one region of the County to another.

Private sector service providers have made significant financial investments in collection and processing equipment, to meet the recycling needs of Cumberland County. These recycling related activities create jobs and support the local economy.

Colleges and universities also actively implement recycling related programs on their campuses. Some of which are award winning.

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#### **SECURED DISPOSAL CAPACITY**

As in the past, the Cumberland County Recycling & Waste Authority and the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners have executed and entered into agreements with a number of facilities to assure that sufficient disposal capacity is available for municipal waste generated in Cumberland County for the next decade.

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#### **SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS**

Still, there is room for improvement. By making minor adjustments, litter prevention and a reduction in illegal dumps should occur, along with an even greater increase in the recovery of recyclable materials.

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#### **REVISIONS TO THE DELEGATION AGREEMENT**

Ambiguities and weaknesses in the delegation agreement between the County and the Authority were targeted as areas for improvement during the planning process. In light of this, the organizational structure utilized to implement the Plan was re-evaluated. A County Department with an advisory Authority was determined as the best organizational structure. The Authority has the ability to make recommendations for facility design, development, real estate and procurement. However, the County retains ultimate approval for the finances and thus it has final say on the budget and any large expenditure.

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#### **EXISTING COUNTY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

The County will maintain support of its own existing programs, provided that local conditions at any given time are not cost prohibitive. Those ongoing programs and services, which will remain in service include:

- Household Hazardous Waste Collection
- Yard Waste Processing Equipment Cooperative
- Grant Application Assistance
- Community Outreach and Awareness

## MAINTENANCE AND REPLACEMENT OF YARD WASTE EQUIPMENT

Arguably, the most valued service that the County provides to the municipalities is the yard waste processing equipment cooperative. With the discontinuation of the administrative fees and a diminishing reserve balance, the County can no longer assume the full costs of the maintenance program.

To sustain the program moving forward, user fees need to represent more accurately the true full costs. A formula or some other mechanism based on use should be established for an annual stipend from the municipalities, which would be dedicated to this purpose. This action will begin in 2013 and continue each year of the planning period.

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## ENHANCED COUNTY COLLECTION PROGRAMS

To enhance the waste management program, it is recommended that the County consider opportunities to provide convenient and affordable disposal outlets for not only regular household waste, but also difficult to manage materials.

### DISCARDED ELECTRONIC DEVICES

With the implementation of the Covered Device Recycling Act of 2010, an increase in the recovery of discarded electronic devices is expected. The Cumberland County Department of Recycling and Waste Management will be commissioning a study in 2013 to determine best practices and roles for county agencies in facilitating compliance with the CDRA.

### TIRES, WHITE GOODS AND BULKY ITEMS

According to Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, some of the most common items found in illegal dump sites are white goods (appliances), household furnishings, mattresses, and tires. Studies show that when outlets are readily available to accept these materials, the incidence of illegal dumping decreases. Areas of the County exist where no collection service is available for these types of items. In addition, there is a need to provide options for residents countywide whose circumstances dictate immediate removal of the materials. The Authority will conduct an investigation and analysis to determine the best fit for Cumberland County. This activity is anticipated to occur in planning year 2015.

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## COUNTY SUPPORT FOR OTHER PROGRAMS

Residential waste and recycling curbside collection services are beyond the normal jurisdiction of the County. However, that does not preclude the County from providing support to municipalities desiring to expand their services, switch to a Pay As You Throw (PAYT) rate structure, or issue its first request for competitive bids for collection service. Likewise, the County can lend support to schools and

government facilities looking to implement recycling programs and contract for similar services.

#### **MUNICIPAL FORUMS**

The County should consider organized forums to foster peer to peer exchanges with municipal officials. These meetings could be used to expose municipal officials to new concepts, regulatory initiatives, and best practices. This action is anticipated to begin in 2014.

#### **FACILITATING SINGLE STREAM RECYCLING**

With the availability of single stream recycling, which dramatically increases the types and amounts of recyclable materials collected, 96-gallon recycling containers have become commonplace in curbside programs throughout Pennsylvania and the nation. Municipal ownership of these carts levels the competitive bidding for waste and recycling collection. The County should assist municipalities in obtaining grant funding for at least a portion of the cart purchases. Such support will commence in 2013 and continue throughout the planning period.

#### **RECYCLING IN NON-MANDATED COMMUNITIES**

Improving the participation rate of facilities at all levels of government to recycle was considered important in the advisory discussions. During the planning period, the County should establish an outreach campaign targeted at government facilities in non-mandated communities. Some of these efforts could also be used to expand school recycling in the same community. Joint marketing of recyclable materials might even be considered. This campaign is anticipated for launching in 2016-2017.