

SOLID WASTE SUBELEMENT

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9.5.1 INTRODUCTION

This Subelement is primarily concerned with identifying solid waste facility needs that may be required to handle future solid waste volumes. Collection and disposal of hazardous as well as non-hazardous materials and wastes are considered.

Although collection of solid waste represents a large percentage of total solid waste costs, disposal is generally the most problematic. Two factors or trends have served to exacerbate the disposal problem:

- continued increase in solid waste volumes, and
- decline of available land for disposal sites.

In Pinellas County and the City of St. Petersburg these factors are especially acute. The County has little remaining undeveloped land with environmental characteristics suitable for accommodation of sanitary landfills. As a result the County in conjunction with the incorporated municipalities has invested in capital facilities that reduce the volume of the solid waste stream and conserve landfill capacity (Refuse-to-Energy Plant).

The City's Evaluation and Appraisal Report, prepared in 1996, revealed the following:

- ~~Between 1989 and 1995, only 872,114 tons of solid waste were burned on an annual average, while the operator of the refuse to energy plant guaranteed that 928,000 tons per year can be incinerated.~~
- ~~While the total tonnage of solid waste landfilled had fluctuated since 1989, the prospect for less refuse to be landfilled in the future was good, in that there was excess capacity to incinerate and the recycling rate continues to increase.~~
- ~~Pinellas County, as a whole, achieved its goal of reducing the solid waste stream by 30 percent (via recycling) in 1992. By 1995, the rate of recycling had increased to an estimated 42 percent.~~

Solid waste collection is the responsibility of the City, while all solid waste disposal is the responsibility of Pinellas County. The City and the County have the same designated level of service (LOS) of 1.3 tons per year per person, while there is no generation rate for nonresidential uses. The County currently receives and disposes of municipal solid waste and construction and demolition debris generated throughout Pinellas County. All of the solid waste collected in the County is recycled, combusted or buried in a modern sanitary landfill, i.e., Bridgeway Acres.

In calendar year 2007, the City's demand for solid waste service was approximately 0.97 tons per person per year, below the adopted LOS standard. This figure is calculated as follows: 276,645 tons of commercial and residential solid waste collected (including recyclables and material from the City's five brush sites) divided by the City's 2007 functional population of 284,462. Demand for solid waste service for all of Pinellas County in calendar year 2007 was approximately 0.99 tons per person per year, which is also below the adopted LOS standard. This figure is calculated as follows: 1,119,607 tons of solid waste collected in the County [resource recovery plant (902,255 tons) plus the landfill (217,352 tons)] divided by the County's 2007 functional population of 1,123,922.

The City and County's commitment to recycling and waste reduction programs, and the continued participation of residents and businesses in these programs, have assisted in keeping the actual demand for solid waste service below the adopted LOS standard. It has been estimated that approximately 31 percent of the solid waste stream was recycled in Pinellas County in the 2004 through 2006 calendar year.

The Pinellas County Waste-to-Energy Plant and the Bridgeway Acres Sanitary Landfill are the responsibility of Pinellas County Utilities, Department of Solid Waste Operations; however, they are operated and maintained under contract by two private companies. The Waste-to-Energy Plant continues to operate below its design capacity of incinerating 977,287 tons of solid waste per year. The continuation of successful recycling efforts and the efficient operation of the Waste-to-Energy Plant have helped to extend the life span of Bridgeway Acres. The landfill has approximately 60 years remaining, based on current grading and disposal plans.

The Sanitation Department continuously services and maintains 78,000 residential and 6,200 commercial accounts.

This solid waste Subelement addresses the issues related to the management of solid waste in St. Petersburg.

9.5.2 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

GOAL-SOLID WASTE (SW):

Provide the most cost-effective and efficient solid waste collection and disposal service while providing maximum practical protection to the environment.

ISSUE: Solid Waste Collection

The City of St. Petersburg Sanitation Department is responsible for collecting and transporting solid waste within the municipal boundaries. The Sanitation Department is responsible for residential and commercial collection routes, and several materials recovery (brush) sites.

OBJECTIVE SW1:

Provide the most cost-effective, environmentally sound and efficient plan for solid waste collection for the City of St. Petersburg service area.

Policies:

- SW1.1 Provide solid waste collection activities that are compatible with existing and future development.
- SW1.2 Continue to provide regular maintenance of existing and future solid waste collection facilities and equipment to improve efficiency and life span.
- SW1.3 Continue to route collection vehicles in the most efficient manner possible consistent with an automated collection system.
- SW1.4 Continue to operate the six materials recovery sites for the convenient collection and reuse of yard waste, bulky wastes and brush materials.
- SW1.5 Expand public awareness regarding special collection services offered by the City's Sanitation Department, e.g., bulk furniture pick-up, and annual neighborhood clean-up campaigns, etc.

ISSUE: Capital Improvements Planning

The City will continue to provide reliable and safe service for solid waste collection and disposal. This effort will require identifying future needs, the associated costs, and the ability to pay for them.

OBJECTIVE SW2:

As an ongoing objective the City of St. Petersburg will continue to utilize the existing funding arrangements for provision of adequate revenue to finance the operation and maintenance of quality solid waste collection and disposal service.

Policies:

- SW2.1 Prioritization and scheduling of major improvements associated with solid waste activities shall be accomplished as a component of the Capital Improvement Program.
- SW2.2 Capital improvements associated with the Sanitation Department of the City of St. Petersburg shall not be included in the Capital Improvements Element of the Comprehensive Plan unless they involve additional capital facilities such as materials

recovery sites and administrative offices. Equipment such as collection vehicles and containers shall not be included in the Capital Improvements Element.

- SW2.3 Operation and maintenance of City of St. Petersburg solid waste activities, along with contingency funds for same, should be supported by appropriate rates in the form of users fees.
- SW2.4 Rates should be periodically reviewed to determine the adequacy for financial support of the operation, maintenance and contingency funds associated with solid waste activities.
- SW2.5 The City of St. Petersburg should continue to seek financial support of solid waste activities through available grant programs administered by appropriate state and federal agencies. In addition, the City shall coordinate with other Pinellas County local governments in seeking grants that are awarded for multi-jurisdictional efforts.

ISSUE: Reduction of the Solid Waste Stream

The City of St. Petersburg's recycling program is designed to achieve the maximum reduction of the solid waste stream utilizing current recycling techniques that will minimize the financial burden on citizens. Each collection and education project is planned and implemented with the ultimate goal of changing the City's throwaway habits and to recycle as much as possible. The first step in achieving the state goal of reducing the solid waste stream by 30 percent was to become a dedicated partner with Pinellas County. This relationship provides a systematic approach to research and review all recycling information to achieve a unified effort countywide. ~~Countywide recycling increased from 22 percent of the solid waste stream in 1990 to 42 percent in 1995.~~

OBJECTIVE SW3:

The City shall increase municipal recycling to 25 percent of the total waste stream and shall coordinate with Pinellas County to maintain recycling at a minimum of 30 percent of the total waste stream or to the extent required by law, and shall utilize reduction and recycling options, including but not limited to:

1. identification of suitable materials and markets for recycling;
2. testing of recycling systems through pilot programs;
3. coordination with existing solid waste collection, disposal and recycling operations;
4. identification of economies of scale that may be achieved through coordinated multi-jurisdictional and private programs;
5. evaluation of the costs and benefits relative to achieving reductions in the volume of the solid waste stream;

6. expansion of citywide drop-off center source separation recycling program(s).

Cost-effective and feasible programs shall be implemented on an ongoing basis.

Policies:

- SW3.1 The City shall coordinate with Pinellas County per the requirements of the existing recycling interlocal agreement and through participation in the Pinellas County Solid Waste Technical Management Committee to increase recycling to a minimum of 30 percent of the total waste stream or to the extent required by law.
- SW3.2 In development of the solid waste reduction program, private and voluntary solid waste recycling programs shall be allowed to continue and expand operations.
- SW3.3 The City shall participate in the development of a countywide public information program to inform the public about agencies and organizations engaged in recycling.
- SW3.4 The existing City yard waste recycling, office paper recycling and mixed metals recovery programs shall be continued and expanded, provided markets are available for materials and products.
- SW3.5 The City shall support ~~Support~~ the passage of legislation that ensures markets for usable recycled materials and products through the City's lobbying resources in Pinellas County, Tallahassee and Washington, D.C.
- ~~SW3.6 The City shall continue to implement the curbside pick-up program (for recycling), and shall consider expansion of the program if it is determined that such expansion would be cost effective and feasible.~~
- SW3.~~6~~7 The City believes that a container deposit bill is an appropriate mechanism to assist in managing solid waste and encourages its adoption on a statewide level.

ISSUE: Pinellas County Solid Waste Disposal System

The City of St. Petersburg will continue to participate in the countywide solid waste disposal system. That system includes the existing Refuse-to-Energy Plant and associated landfills and any additional facilities that may be required in the future to meet solid waste disposal needs. The City "shares" the Refuse-to-Energy Plant with 23 other municipalities and the unincorporated areas of the County. No proportional capacity has been assigned to any of the entities that utilize the facility. Pinellas County has adopted a solid waste level of service demand of 1.3 tons per person, per year. The City has also adopted this level of service.

OBJECTIVE SW4:

The City of St. Petersburg shall work with Pinellas County to ensure that the solid waste disposal system is able to accommodate all solid waste disposal needs through the year 2020.

Policies:

SW4.1 Efforts to expand solid waste disposal capacity to meet the increasing needs of Pinellas County shall be supported by the City of St. Petersburg.

SW4.2 The City of St. Petersburg shall adopt the solid waste disposal level of service established by the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners: 1.304 tons per person per year.

GOAL-HAZARDOUS WASTE (SWII):

The City of St. Petersburg shall encourage and support the proper management and disposal of hazardous wastes.

ISSUE: Hazardous Waste Management

Hazardous wastes require special collection and disposal procedures that are separate and unique from the previously described solid waste management system. The health and environmental hazards of these wastes make their proper management a critical issue in relation to protecting the general public's health and safety. The City has cooperated with Pinellas County on numerous hazardous waste programs, including the Household Chemical Waste Disposal Program that was established in 1993. Pinellas County residents are able to bring household chemicals to the Household Chemical Collection Center for proper and safe disposal. The center accepts many materials, including fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, paint thinners, automotive fluids, and oil based paints. Companies which produce up to 25 gallons of hazardous waste per month are encouraged to participate in Pinellas County's Chemical Collection Day program, which is held once every three months at the center. Companies which generate large amounts of hazardous waste are encouraged to call the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The City also coordinates and cooperates with Pinellas County in promoting the Used Oil Collection Centers. These centers, several of which are located within the City, accept used oil from cars, trucks, boats, motorcycles, recreational vehicles and lawn mowers.

The St. Petersburg Fire Department operates a state-of-the-art Emergency Response Hazardous Materials Team to address hazardous waste/material accidents or spills. This specialty team operates out of the Fire Suppression Division. As of December, 1991, the City's team is also part of the Pinellas County Hazardous Materials Response Team, the purpose of which is to provide advance-level hazardous materials mitigation capability to all of Pinellas County.

OBJECTIVE SW5:

The City of St. Petersburg will continue to coordinate with the Pinellas County Department of Solid Waste Management and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in the implementation of a hazardous waste management program.

Policies:

- SW5.1 The St. Petersburg Sanitation Department will not collect or transport hazardous wastes.
- SW5.2 The City of St. Petersburg will support and coordinate with the Pinellas County Department of Solid Waste Management in promoting and operating a permanent, year-round household hazardous transfer/temporary storage facility.
- SW5.3 The City of St. Petersburg will disseminate educational materials to the public on the safe storage, handling, treatment, transporting, and disposing of hazardous waste, including batteries.
- SW5.4 The City of St. Petersburg will coordinate hazardous waste management activities with other governmental entities such as the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Pinellas County.
- SW5.5 The St. Petersburg Fire Department Hazardous Materials Response Team will continue to provide citywide emergency response for hazardous waste accidents or spills.
- SW5.6 The City shall continue to enforce the provisions of Chapter 13 15, Articles III and IV, (~~Ordinance 938-F~~) of the City Code, as amended, regarding hazardous materials and substances.
- SW5.7 The City continues to encourage the operation of the Refuse-to-Energy Plant in an environmentally safe-and-sound manner, and encourages Pinellas County to continue to meet or exceed, ~~by 1999, the new~~ federal Environmental Protection Agency's air quality guidelines.