

EAC Solid Waste Subcommittee Plan of Action Revised September 2011

The solid waste subcommittee was formed several years ago to address how recycling could be jump started and be dovetailed with efforts to address shortfalls in available landfill capacity in the County and the need for a Waste to Energy (WTE) joint project with Frederick County. More specifically, the expectation several years ago was that a very aggressive recycling program might eliminate the need for either enhanced transport out of the County or the need for a WTE facility. The long-term problem with landfill capacity is largely unresolved and is currently being re-assessed. There may be additional efforts including the possibility of burning some solid waste at the Lehigh Cement facility at Union Bridge.

Challenges of “Quantum Jump” approach in Recycling vs “Evolutionary” improvement

Although Carroll municipalities offer some advantages since they generally have a single trash hauler (two do their own trash hauling), the large bulk of the County residential pickup is from a diverse group of about 23 private contractors with no clearly marked territories and generally no multiple dwelling arrangements. The County has not been successful to date in getting these trash haulers to buy into an enhanced recycling program.

It is worth noting that the Town of Mount Airy (just recognized this year for its efforts) spent over fifteen years getting to the point where it is today. Having a Town Recycling Committee and spokesman specify contract provisions to Key Sanitation, the contractor, was crucial. Soon, at a future EAC Meeting, we should ask Mount Airy Councilman Wendi Peters to give a presentation.

Suggested Approach for EAC.

The County has been given reasonably high marks in the past two years for its recycling program and has shown steady improvement, albeit slower than some EAC members would prefer. On the other hand, the evaluation of need for or hauling trash is a very highly politicized decision, and appears to be decided without too much input from the EAC. Thus, recycling goals should be addressed regardless of the WTE decision.

Things recommended we should do (or continue to do):

- Start to maintain a dialog and relationship with private County-wide trash hauler contractors.
- Contact Municipalities and request they identify a recycling coordinator. Hold meetings with the objective of boosting recycling--either via the Maryland Municipal League County Chapter or the County “association” of Town Managers.
- Continue to work and coordinate with Maria Myers on an outreach basis—this could be a joint effort.
- Continue looking into obtaining large recycling bins.
- Provide input into WTE or long term trash options as they become available.
- Invite Wendi Peters soon to speak at an EAC meeting.