



Solid Waste Management Plan Regional Forums 2013—Highlights

Four Regional Forums were held in the following Places:

November 6

Northern Rhode Island
Woonsocket Library
303 Clinton Street, Woonsocket

November 7

Southern Rhode Island
URI Bay Campus
Coastal Institute Bldg. - Hazard Room
215 South Ferry Rd, Narragansett

November 12

Newport County
Best Western Mainstay Inn
151 Admiral Kalbfus Rd, Newport

November 14

Central Rhode Island
Rhode Island College
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Alger 110, School of Management
Providence

Citizens and solid waste professionals were provided with 4 opportunities to become involved with the development of an update to the RI Solid Waste Management Plan. Regional public workshops were noticed and conducted. The Advisory Committee for the Plan and other solid waste stakeholders were also invited to the forums.

At each forum the citizens were invited to view solid waste informational materials, maps, and an aerial photograph of the Central Landfill. Resource Recovery Corporation (RRC), Division of Planning (DOP) and Department of Environmental Management staff were present and answered questions on solid waste management in general, recycling issues, the purposes of the Plan and the planning process. Direct questions were answered in open discussions that followed an informational presentation by RRC. Attendees were asked to fill out a survey with questions about solid waste. An estimated 35 persons attended the Forums. The RCC and DOP continue to use their websites to inform the public about the progress of the Plan update and to gather public input through the survey on each agency website.

Some of the key concerns expressed were:

- **What's next? What happens when the Central Landfill is full in 25 years ?-** What options do we have? What is the best technology we should be looking at? Is it anaerobic digestion (food waste to energy), burn plants, plasma plants, and gasification? What will work for the scale RI needs? Why not privatize - economics? What are other states doing like us? Why not waste to energy?
- **Finances & Tipping fees** — How do the current fees work and what do they pay for? What is and isn't sustainable? How to set a fee to pay for it all? How do recycling efforts affect tipping fees? Why not ban things? How about more carrot and sticks? What about Pay as You Throw ? (PAYT) - the pro's and con's and obstacles. Should PAYT be a state mandate or mandatory at local level or?
- **Business Options**—What are the options for businesses today? Recycling is not free. How do we make the economics work for businesses so more recycling will take place? Can we do more with big events? - Green Hospitality Events? Relationships between haulers and businesses were also discussed.
- **Education** – Perception of waste needs to change. Waste should be seen as an opportunity. Haulers need education. Remind people that chasing arrows /Mobius doesn't mean a product is recyclable in RI. More is needed.
- **Commercial Recycling** — Perception is that commercial recycling is a problem. Needs more enforcement. DEM needs more staff and should use fines to pay for it. RRC doesn't have the authority to do it. Lots of examples were given such as "the fast food places where I go do not recycle". Legislation on parallel services could be developed. Haulers need reform. Encourage Main St pick up programs. RRC can do business assessments.

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Key concerns continued:

- **Recycling Participation** — What is the overall diversion rate and recycling rate? Rates by Town? Are cities and towns doing enough? Is there enough communication? What drives what is collected? \$ Are there enough incentives in the system?
- **Recycling Items and Markets** - Questions about what is and what is not recyclable at this time and was allowed before the single stream. Explanations for what you to make special trips for i.e. things which can't go through the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) example; wire coat hangers. The cleaner & drier the materials the higher the price. Are there markets for other materials? Trash should be seen as a resource not trash. Why not use disposal bans? What are other state up to? Existing partnerships and opportunities between states. Where do the recyclables go that RRC collects? What about and items mentioned specially were Styrofoam, clothing, carpets and other fabrics.? Suggestion to add clothing collection to EcoDepot events. What about working with building contractors for recycling more from their projects job by job?
- **Composting & Food waste** — What is best way? Single largest opportunity for diversion. Seemed to be general support. Management near the source is best. Best is in your backyard. Should there be centralized food waste collection or municipal collections or allow private business to do it? What are options in between? DEM looking at 2014 legislation targeting certain businesses if a processing facility exists within a certain radius Like Connecticut does. Not yet ready for prime time.
- **Miscellaneous** —
 - A number of people supported the banning of plastic shopping bags.
 - Several attendees asked for the State to “think big” and be bold about its recommendations.
 - Why can't NASA Solve our problem?

To learn more on the Plan update visit:

www.Planning.RI.gov

and click on the link for Solid Waste