

Philadelphia SWRAC Goal-Setting Subcommittee: Meeting Notes from 12/15/2015

Present:

Michelle Feldman, Maurice Sampson, Jack Embick, Andrew Sharp, Phil Bresee, Scott McGrath

Overview:

Staff provided review of current recycling and diversion goals, which consist of the State's 35 percent recycling diversion goal as established by PA Act 101 (1988), and the 70 percent diversion from landfill goal, set in the Philly Greenworks plan. Staff provided hand outs that detailed or summarized current and to-date progress, and also included charts that detail overall solid waste generation trends, MSW composition data, "evolving ton" data, and comparisons with other jurisdictions (meeting hand outs are attached).

The methodology used for compiling annual solid waste and recycling statistics was discussed, with staff explaining that overall and commercial disposal tonnages are reported through the state and that the Streets Department manages its own data for disposal and recycling. Staff noted though that recycling reporting from the private sector is more challenging, and that haulers, processors, and generators are not mandated to report to the City. Staff indicated that this is one of the things that the City hopes to fix through legislation in 2016.

There were also discussions on reported recycling rates vs. net recycling totals (i.e. minus residue and yield loss). Staff agreed to acknowledge these differences in subcommittee reports and the Solid Waste Management Plan.

Framework for Goal-Setting:

Participants identified a number of considerations and objectives:

- Goals should be both aspirational and operationally pragmatic (i.e. realistic); realism will be critical in setting a timeline.
- Goals should also be both programmatic and quantitative: audit existing programming and assess strategic program gaps (all while being cognizant of necessary resources for success).
- Goals can help flush out and present resources needs; SWRAC can serve as advocates for resources.
- Since we won't have a new waste composition study completed within the time frame needed to set goals for inclusion in the Solid Waste Management Plan, our goals will have to be flexible.
- Goals should recognize the imperfect nature of our data (specifically from the commercial side) and include measures to address data quality issues.
- The Solid Waste Plan's planning horizon is 10 years (2016-2025) but goals can be set for a longer time frame.
- Goals should be structured incrementally with milestones.

Process / Timeline / Tasks:

- The target for presentation and consideration by SWRAC is March 2016.
- By mid January Recycling Office will identify and summarize the varying interpretations of zero waste. The Recycling Office will also continue to research goals from other jurisdictions and how they might apply (or not) in Philadelphia.
- The Recycling Office will identify existing programs and their impacts, and will estimate impacts of potential new programs.
- The Recycling Office will contact DEP about a new waste composition study to be supported by grant funds.
- The Recycling Office and Office of Sustainability will ensure the incoming administration will be briefed on the plan and given opportunities to provide input.