

# Regional Solid Waste Management Plan Guidance

## Purpose

This document is intended to provide guidance to counties within a region who are either considering a regional solid waste management plan (RSWMP) or are in the process of developing a RSWMP. This guide discusses the purpose, benefits, content, layout, and requirements of a RSWMP.

## What is a RSWMP?

A RSWMP provides a 10-year plan to develop regional programs and goals across counties that have:

- Similar current and future solid waste programs, including but not limited to:
  - recycling collection and marketing
  - waste recovery through waste to energy (WTE)
  - organics management
  - educational programs
  - disposal at same landfill
  - transportation networks
- Consistent population, demography, land use, policies, programs, and goals.

**A RSWMP is not** individual county solid waste management plans (SWMPs) bound together.

## Purpose of a RSWMP

- To develop regional solid waste management goals to further the waste management hierarchy.
- Condense multiple individual county solid waste plans into one document.
- Provide guidance and development for efficiencies in solid waste management such as county programs, staffing, and budgets as resources become more restrictive.

## Benefits to counties and MPCA

- The time and monetary savings.
- Take multiple county plans and condense into a single concise document where information is shared across multiple counties.

## What is required in a RSWMP?

*Minn. Stat. § 115A.02 lays the foundation for county planning. It contains the legislative declaration of the policy and purposes of the Waste Management Act. It states that plans must address and serve the following state policies and purposes.*

- Reduction in the amount of solid waste generated.
- Separation and recovery of materials and energy from waste.
- Reduction in indiscriminate dependence on disposal of waste.
- Coordination of solid waste management among political subdivisions.

- Orderly and deliberate development and financial security of waste facilities, including disposal facilities.

*Minn. Stat. § 115A.46 contains the general requirements and content requirements for a plan.*

- Describe the county in geographic and demographic terms.
- Describe the county's existing waste management system.
- List the county's waste management policies and goals.
- Describe the most prudent and feasible alternatives for future waste management.
- Identify a schedule to carry out waste management programs consistent with state statutes.
- Identify the required land disposal capacity for the proposed system.
- Describe county policies and list ordinances.
- Regional programs existing and proposed.

## Getting started

### Timeline

The MPCA recommendation for starting a single county plan is 18 months.

The recommendation for a regional plan is 24 months.

- Kick-off meeting with the MPCA Planner and group
- Select a project manager to assure the project meets its goals

### Agreement options to get the work done

The purpose of an agreement is to set out terms under which the counties will operate to accomplish completion of a RSWMP and follow through with its implementation.

Determine if the group needs to develop agreements to get the work done, for example, a joint powers agreement (JPA) or memorandum of understanding (MOU), to accomplish the following:

- Delegate an authorized representative to take responsibility for finances
  - Invoicing and main contact for consultant
  - Determine how costs will be covered per county, for instance, percentage based on county population size
- Set timelines for submittals and drafts to the MPCA
- To manage the planning process

### Getting the plan written

- A consultant is highly recommended with technical assistance by the counties and their MPCA solid waste planner.
- Some counties also utilize planner services from their regional development commission.
- All participating counties must be involved with the RSWMP, just as they would actively manage the development of a single county plan.
- Develop work groups to address specific programs such as regional initiatives and transportation analysis:
  - County staff
  - Haulers
  - Solid waste and recycling facilities
  - Tribal nations

## What should the RSWMP look like?

The eight Northeastern Minnesota entities (Northeast), seven counties and one solid waste district, were awarded an MPCA grant to develop a RSWMP. Their finished document can serve as the template for other regional plans.

## Developing your RSWMP based on the Northeast RSWMP as the template

- Determine existing regional solid waste programs in common for all counties.
- Determine proposed regional solid waste programs envisioned for all counties.
- Develop individual county programs.

### Northeast RSWMP as an example

Below are numbered sections from the Northeast RSWMP. The italics detail is specific content that was written into each section of their regional plan. At the end of this section, there are example graphs and tables to show how regional background information can be conveyed. A full Northeast RSWMP can be provided upon request.

1. Executive summary

2. Introduction

3. Background information

*Summary of Regional Background Information*

- Regional Population Trends
- Regional Geographic Information
- Regional Economic Trends
- Regional Demographic and Geographic Constraints and Opportunities
- Solid Waste Composition
- MSW Collection Service
- MSW Rate Structure
- Largest Solid Waste Generators
- Regional Solid Waste Collection and Generation Constraints/Opportunities
- Local and Regional Solid Waste Planning in the Last Five Years

4. Existing solid waste management systems

5. Alternative analysis

*Current Regional Program Cooperation Transportation Analysis*

- Methodology
- Findings
- Constraints and Barriers Limiting Independence from Land Disposal
- Geographic and Demographic
- Financial
- Technical
- Demonstration of No Alternatives More Feasible Than Land Disposal

6. Proposed solid waste management system

*Solid Waste Reduction and Education*

- Region Coordinated Initiatives–Solid Waste Reduction and Education
- County/District/JPA Local Initiatives–Solid Waste Reduction and Education

*Recycling*

- Region Coordinated Initiatives–Recycling
- County/District/JPA Local Initiatives–Recycling

7. Solid waste ordinances
8. Solid waste program staffing, expenses and funding
9. Plan review and ten-year update
10. Goal volume table
11. Development of program budget
  - Regional staffing for solid waste programs
  - Individual and regional funding sources and program expenses
  - Program annual budgets
12. Alternatives to proposed system
13. Environmental and public health impacts
14. Solid waste facility siting program
15. Public participation

**\*Table 2-1: Regional Population Trends**

County	2010 Population	2020 Population	2030 Population Projection	Projected 10-Year Population Trend
Aitkin	16,202 <sup>1</sup>	15,697 <sup>2</sup>	14,314 <sup>3</sup>	-5.8%
Carlton	35,386 <sup>1</sup>	36,207 <sup>2</sup>	36,754 <sup>3</sup>	1.2%
Cook	5,176 <sup>1</sup>	5,600 <sup>2</sup>	5,718 <sup>3</sup>	2.1%
Itasca	45,058 <sup>1</sup>	45,014 <sup>2</sup>	47,246 <sup>3</sup>	1.3%
Koochiching	13,311 <sup>1</sup>	12,062 <sup>2</sup>	10,570 <sup>3</sup>	-11.4%
Lake	10,866 <sup>1</sup>	10,905 <sup>2</sup>	9,536 <sup>3</sup>	-6.9%
St. Louis	200,226 <sup>1</sup>	200,231 <sup>2</sup>	199,030 <sup>3</sup>	-0.6%
WLSSD	137,411 <sup>4</sup>	139,249 <sup>5</sup>	141,087	1.3%
<b>Region Total</b>	<b>326,225</b>	<b>325,716</b>	<b>323,168</b>	<b>-0.8%</b>

\*NE MN RSWMP

**Table 2-6: Regional Economic Information**

County <sup>a</sup>	Median Household Income <sup>b</sup>	Per Capita Income	Labor Force Change (2005-2020)	Projected Labor Force Change (2020-2030)	Unemployment Rate (2021)
Aitkin	\$49,351	\$29,275	-6.8%	-7.9%	7.8%
Carlton	\$63,098	\$29,440	2.3%	-2.9%	6.9%
Cook	\$57,432	\$33,194	-6.5%	-3.9%	7.6%
Itasca	\$55,139	\$30,286	-3.8%	-3.3%	8.1%
Koochiching	\$50,870	\$29,834	-17.4%	-17.1%	7.0%
Lake	\$61,452	\$34,207	-11.9%	-11.4%	6.7%
St. Louis	\$60,434	\$31,537	-1.5%	-5.6%	6.8%

**Figure 4-2: NE MN Transportation Analysis: Current vs. Proposed One-Way Haul Distance**

