

# Chapter I

## Introduction

The Clark County Solid Waste Management Plan (The Plan) was developed to provide decision-makers with goals and policies for implementing, evaluating and modifying existing and future solid waste management programs. This Plan includes updated descriptions of existing conditions and programs to reflect progress and accomplishments over the previous years. It lists policies and practices reviewed by the Solid Waste Advisory Commission, solid waste staff, representatives of the seven cities, interested citizens, solid waste industry representatives and others. The policies and practices recommended by SWAC were adopted by the Clark County Board of County Commissioners and City Councils. They will guide solid waste policy into the future and outline programs and approaches for the coming five years.

This Plan provides decision-makers with three important tools:

- Guidelines for the development of programs, policies and operating plans;
- Background information to support facility permitting decisions by the Clark County Public Health and other local government agencies;
- The technical support and justification for grant applications, capital project fund requests and future programs.

The Plan also provides the general public with information about solid waste management in Clark County. The plan has been made more accessible by eliminating some historical and detailed background information. The reader wanting this information is referred to previous plans which are available on the internet or through the Clark County Solid Waste Program.

The purpose of solid waste management activities in Clark County is to protect and preserve human health, environmental quality and natural resources through efficient, cost-effective programs and services.

### **Federal and State Guidelines and State Planning Requirements**

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified the following hierarchy as the most environmentally sound strategies for managing municipal solid waste. Source reduction (including reuse) is the most preferred method, followed by recycling and composting. Last is disposal in combustion facilities with energy recovery and properly designed landfills.

As are all counties in the state, Clark County is required by the Washington Solid Waste Management, Reduction and Recycling Act (Revised Code of Washington

[RCW] 70.95) to prepare a 20-year Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan. The Plan must be developed in association with cities and towns located in the county and reviewed at least every 5 years. The Plan has been prepared in accordance with requirements and intent of RCW 70.95 and the Washington Department of Ecology's Guidelines for the Development of Local Solid Waste Management Plans and Plan Revisions (WDOE 90-11 (revised)); Dec. 1999). Clark County is incorporating into this Plan priorities for solid waste handling which place energy recovery at a higher hierarchy level than the state. The County will continue to emphasize "Reduce, Reuse & Recycle" in its programs and messages. This hierarchy is as follows:

1. waste reduction;
2. reuse;
3. recycling, with source separation of recyclable materials as the preferred method;
4. energy recovery of separated waste;
5. incineration and landfilling of separated wastes;
6. energy recover of mixed waste;
7. incineration and landfilling of mixed wastes.

In accordance with RCW 70.95, the Plan emphasizes the source separation of recyclable materials from solid wastes as a fundamental component of a local jurisdiction's solid waste management strategy, and implements waste reduction and recycling programs to assist the state in effectively reaching the state's goal of a statewide recycling rate of 50% of the waste stream.

The Plan includes an inventory and evaluation of existing programs and facilities, a twenty-year forecast of facility and program needs, an implementation plan and schedule, and methods for monitoring and evaluating solid waste management activities within the County and cities.

## **Plan Goals and Objectives**

The intent of the Plan is to establish the foundation for the proper management of solid and moderate risk wastes in Clark County, both now and in the future. The Plan incorporates the following guiding or philosophical principles:

- A commitment to sustainability that ensures resources and options for future generations
- Balance among public convenience, public expenses, public health and the environment;
- Flexibility to anticipate future changes and needs;
- Commitment to waste reduction and recycling;

- Increased local control of solid waste management;
- Integrity of waste stream measurement and monitoring;
- Encouragement of cooperative and coordinated efforts among government agencies, citizens and the private sector for managing solid wastes.

## Relationship to Other Plans and Reports

The following plans and reports that are already in effect or are being developed separately may interact with the contents of this Plan. The following summarizes the more significant of these and their connection with the Plan.

### Washington State Solid Waste Management Plan

Washington State, through the Department of Ecology, is required under RCW 70.95 to develop and maintain a long-range plan for the management of solid wastes. The goals and policies expressed in the state plan establish the framework upon which solid waste systems are to be administered and implemented throughout the state. Local plans should be consistent with these goals and policies, unless these management approaches are superseded by new state laws, regulations or plans. The current state plan, Washington State's *Beyond Waste Project*, was issued in November 2004. The vision in this plan is as follows:

*We can transition to a society where waste is viewed as inefficient, and where most wastes and toxic substances have been eliminated. This will contribute to economic, social and environmental vitality.*

From this vision, five initiatives were selected and are essential components of the *Beyond Waste Plan*. These focus on reducing wastes and toxic substances in Washington. Successful implementation of these five initiatives will:

1. Significantly reduce most wastes and the use of toxic substances in Washington's industries.
2. Significantly reduce small-volume hazardous wastes from businesses and households.
3. Expand the recycling system in Washington for organic wastes such as food wastes, yard waste, and crop residues.
4. Reduce the negative impacts from the design, construction, and operation of buildings.
5. Develop a system to measure progress in achieving our goals.

This vision, goals and recommendations of the *Beyond Waste Plan* are being incorporated into this Plan and will be included in program opportunities during the upcoming 5 years.

### **Oregon State Solid Waste Management Law**

The State of Oregon requires all out-of-state local government jurisdictions that use Oregon solid waste disposal facilities to comply with Oregon statutes. Clark County and its cities therefore must also meet the applicable Oregon Recycling requirements. Chapter 6, *Waste Diversion* describes these laws in detail.

### **Previous Clark County Solid Waste Management Plans**

Solid waste planning in Clark County was initiated in 1967 with the adoption of the County's first Solid Waste Management Plan. The County adopted updates to the Plan in 1973, 1981, 1985, 1994, 2002, and this Plan in 2008. The Plan was amended in 1986, 1988 and 2006. The *Milestones* in Appendix G provides an overview of the planning history. This Plan is the most current plan for Clark County's rapidly changing solid waste system and replaces all previous plans.

### **Moderate Risk Waste Management Plan**

The Clark and Skamania County Moderate Risk Waste Management Plan established handling and management approaches for household hazardous waste (HHW) and other small-quantity generator and moderate-risk wastes. The plan focused on the need to remove these moderate-risk wastes from traditional solid waste handling and disposal streams. The original plan was prepared for both Clark County and Skamania County and was adopted on December 14, 1988. The Moderate Risk Waste Management Plan was amended in May 1991, July 1991, July 1992, September 1992 and March of 1994. The two counties prepared separate plans when the Clark County Moderate Risk Waste Plan was incorporated as a new chapter into the Clark County Comprehensive Solid Waste Plan adopted in 2002. The Moderate Risk Waste Plan has been updated as a chapter in this Plan.

In 1997, program responsibility for Moderate Risk Waste for Clark County was shifted from the Southwest Washington Health District (now known as Clark County Public Health) to the Clark County Solid Waste Management Program.

### **Comprehensive Growth Management Plan**

The Clark County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan has been updated in 2007. This land use plan established a framework for how Clark County land should be used in the future, including areas designated for urban development and areas identified and designated for rural and natural resource preservation.

### **Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Plan**

A Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was completed in November 1993 with the 1994 Clark County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan. A

Determination of Non-significance was issued with the Plan adopted in 2002. A Determination of Non-significance has been issued with this Plan. The Determination of Non-significance and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Environmental Checklist for this Plan are in Appendix A. This Checklist evaluates the environmental impacts associated with implementing the programs or the non-site-specific aspects of the programs and facilities recommended in the Plan.

### **Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission Cost Assessment**

A cost assessment has been prepared for submittal to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) as part of the Plan. This cost assessment is required by RCW 70.95 and provides the WUTC with an opportunity to review and comment on the impacts of implementing the Plan's programs on solid waste collection rates. The report was prepared to conform with the Cost Assessment Guidelines for Local Solid Waste Management Planning (Second Edition) revised and issued by the WUTC in August 2001. The cost assessment is presented in Appendix B.

### **Biosolids Management Plan**

Clark County adopted the Salmon Creek Basin Sewer Master Plan in 1981 and since the 1986 expansion of the Salmon Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, municipal wastewater biosolids in Clark County have been applied to agricultural land. Currently, the county and biosolids handlers use EPA's 40 CFR Part 503, WAC Chapter 173-308, and the Washington Department of Ecology's Best Management Practices (BMP's) as guidance to maintain regulatory compliance.

### **Groundwater Management Plan**

In 1994, the Washington Department of Ecology and Clark County Board of Commissioners approved *the Ground Water Management Plan for Clark County, Washington (Volumes 1 and 2)*. The Plan is a handbook (or reference document) that individuals and governmental agencies should use to remedy and prevent future groundwater problems. The Plan is a product of a 30-member Ground Water Advisory Committee for Clark County (e.g., local governmental agencies, the business community, as well as environmental and citizen interests), in cooperation with the Washington Department of Ecology and U.S. Geological Survey. The goal is to protect, preserve, and properly manage groundwater and related water resources by applying water and land use regulations; and through education, develop an attitude of individual and community stewardship of groundwater resources in Clark County. The Groundwater Management Program/Plan created a collection of groundwater protection strategies ranging from enhancing public awareness and education, to commercial chemical management, to stormwater management. It established the first countywide groundwater quality testing effort which was completed by U.S.G.S. in 1989. It also created the basis for other programs, including two wellhead protection programs (completed in 2000) and a groundwater modeling program for Clark County, which was completed in 1994. Information and programs developed for the Ground Management Program/Plan supports the County's effort to comply with the state Growth Management Act and Federal Clean Water Act. It also provides valuable information to comply with the Endangered Species Act.

The City of Vancouver has Water Resources Protection Ordinance to protect the rivers, lakes, streams and groundwater in the community. The Ordinance requires everyone to follow minimum standards that help protect the “critical” aquifers underlying the entire city. It also establishes greater standards of compliance for businesses and industries that manage hazardous materials; creates Special Protection Areas around the City’s water stations as an additional safeguard; and provides cooperative, cost-effective solutions through technical assistance, education and public outreach.

### **NPDES Stormwater Management Program**

The NPDES Stormwater Management Program was approved by the Clark County Commissioners in September 1998 as an application to meet the requirements for obtaining a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPDES) for its storm sewers under the federal Clean Water Act. In July 1999, the Washington Department of Ecology issued an NPDES permit for Clark County that required the county to implement the Stormwater Management Program. The stormwater management program is intended to reduce the amount of pollutants discharged to streams, lakes and wetlands from county-owned storm sewers. Solid Waste Program education on proper storage, use, and disposal of hazardous or toxic materials is a key part of the stormwater program. The Solid Waste Program for Household Hazardous Waste collection and disposal is an important element of the NPDES programs. Other actions include projects such as reduction in the use of pesticides and fertilizers.

Other jurisdictions are in the process of implementing NPDES Phase II programs for storm water management.

### **System Related Contracts**

The County and cities have entered into major long-term contracts with private service providers for solid-waste-related services. The Columbia Resource Company (CRC) contract, between Clark County, the City of Vancouver and CRC, gives CRC responsibility for developing and operating transfer stations and a recycling processing facility. The contract is for recycling processing and marketing, transfer, transport and landfill disposal of wastes at the Finley Buttes and Wasco Landfills in Eastern Oregon. CRC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Waste Connections, Inc.

The County and cities have entered into other contracts with private companies for collection of residential recyclable materials and yard debris. Some cities contract for garbage collection if this is not done through municipal crews or through state franchises. Additional contracts have been entered into for the recycling and disposal of household hazardous waste.

### **Post Closure Agreements**

**The Disposal Agreement** between Clark County, the City of Vancouver and the Leichner Brothers Land Reclamation Corporation establishes responsibilities for closure, post-closure maintenance and groundwater remediation of the closed Leichner Landfill.

**The Settlement Agreement** is between Clark County, the City of Vancouver, Clark County Disposal Group companies and the WUTC. The agreement establishes funding channels for closure, post-closure maintenance and remediation activities at the Leichner Landfill.

The County has an agreement with SCS Engineers for landfill gas monitoring and groundwater monitoring at the closed English Pit Landfill.

## **Clark County Solid Waste Advisory Commission**

Clark County's Solid Waste Advisory Commission (SWAC) was originally formed in 1977 by Clark County Ordinance 1977-10-2, in accordance with the provisions of RCW 70.95. This ordinance, as modified over time, has been codified as Clark County Code (CCC) Chapter 24.16. Clark County's SWAC currently consists of nine members, appointed by the Clark County Board of Commissioners, and represents the following interests:

- The Vancouver City Council;
- The councils of the remaining cities and towns;
- Public interest groups;
- The Clark County business community;
- The solid waste management industry;
- The citizens of North Clark County;
- The citizens of Southeast Clark County;
- The citizens of Southwest Clark County;
- The citizens of Clark County at large.

The role of the SWAC is to advise the County Board of Commissioners on solid waste matters; to comment on rules, policies and ordinances; to assist in the development of plan updates; to serve as a means for citizens, industry or other bodies and individuals to participate in solid waste planning; and to advise on any other solid waste matters, as directed by the Board. The SWAC has reviewed and actively participated in the preparation of the Plan.

## **Planning Roles and Authorities**

Following is a brief summary of solid waste management planning authorities, arranged in order of level of government jurisdiction.

## **Washington Department of Ecology**

The Washington Department of Ecology is the state agency responsible for oversight of solid waste management. The Washington Department of Ecology regulates compliance with RCW 70.95, WAC 173-304, and WAC 173-350 through its review and approval of local solid waste management plans.

## **Clark County**

Clark County, through its Department of Public Works, has long-term regional solid waste planning and facility development responsibility within the County. The County's specific responsibilities include authority to prepare and update solid waste management plans which address waste reduction, recycling, transfer and disposal systems. The Clark County Public Health Department has the role of implementing the Plan as it relates to solid waste facility regulation.

## **Participating Jurisdictions**

State law assigns solid waste planning authority to individual local governments (RCW 70.95.08) and requires each county in the state to prepare a plan in cooperation with cities and towns within that county. Cities may choose from the following three options in order to meet their planning requirements:

- Prepare and deliver, to the county auditor, a plan for the city's own solid waste management to be integrated into the county's plan;
- Enter into an agreement with the county in which the city participates in preparing a joint city-county plan for solid waste management;
- Authorize the county to prepare a plan for the city's solid waste management to be included in the county's plan.

The local governments who participate in the preparation of this joint county-city Solid Waste Management Plan, by interlocal agreement with the County, are the Cities of Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver, Washougal, and the Town of Yacolt. The City of Woodland, a small portion of which lies in northwest Clark County and the remainder in Cowlitz County, is participating in Cowlitz County's Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan. After preparation of the Plan, participating jurisdictions will formally consider adoption of the Plan through local resolutions of adoption. Inter-local agreements with the participating cities are included in Appendix D.

## **Plan Development and Adoption Process**

SWAC used the following evaluation criteria to determine if a recommendation should be implemented:

- A commitment to sustainability that ensures resources and options for future generations
- Balance among public convenience, public expenses, public health, and the environment.

Recommendations should look at solid waste management practices in the context of attempting to balance cost and convenience with natural resource conservation and environmental health values.

- Flexibility to anticipate future changes and needs.  
Recommendations should support long term goals and allow for changing circumstances.
- Commitment to waste prevention, reduction and recycling.  
Recommendations should support the prevention and reduction of toxicity and solid waste as well as encourage recycling and other waste diversion opportunities.
- Increased local control of solid waste management.  
Solid waste services should be regulated by the level of government as close to the citizens as appropriate. The County and Cities should have the management tools to achieve the goals of the Plan while fostering competition among service providers.
- Integrity of waste stream measurement and monitoring.  
Recommendations should allow the County to measure, compare and report our past and present efforts in a way that allows us to plan for the future and evaluate the effectiveness of our programs and the resources that we devote to them.
- Encouragement of cooperative and coordinated efforts among government agencies, citizens, and the private sector for managing solid wastes.  
The County should maintain its commitment to collaborative management of solid waste by informing and involving citizens, other agencies, and the private sector.

The current process for this update involved an internal review by staff of the chapters with recommended language changes. Updates include changes in the solid waste system and recommended changes or additions/deletions to alternatives. This language was reviewed by the cities and town. SWAC reviewed each chapter along with staff. This included a status review of Plan recommendations and any suggested changes. Analysis and discussion occurred during the regular monthly SWAC meetings. SWAC reviewed and recommended the Preliminary Draft Plan.

This Preliminary Draft Plan was submitted to the Washington Department of Ecology for review and comment and to the WUTC for evaluation for collection ratemaking purposes. On the basis of the comments received from the Washington Department of Ecology and the WUTC, revisions were made to the Plan. The Plan was reviewed and adopted in public meetings by the participating cities in accordance with the Interlocal Agreements with those jurisdictions. The Plan was adopted by the Clark County Board of Commissioners in a public hearing. Appendix C details the process and meeting dates for updating the Plan.

## **Plan Modification and Revision**

RCW 70.95 requires that the Plan be reviewed at least after five years; updating can occur at the five-year review or at other points in time, as needed. With each update, the Plan must be extended to show a revised 6-year construction and capital

acquisition plan and any long-range needs for the next 20 years. The next plan review and update will be scheduled for 2013.

The County and/or participating cities may elect to modify the Plan prior to the full plan update. In addition, the Washington Department of Ecology maintains the authority to require minor changes to the Plan.

For minor revisions, such as not undertaking activities from the 5 or 20-Year Plans, the County will:

- Explain in writing how the deviation will better contribute to accomplishing one or more goals of the Plan;
- Notify all cities and town;
- Notify and give the public an opportunity to comment, either prior to, or at a regular SWAC meeting;
- Notify the Washington Department of Ecology of the proposed modification;
- Discuss the issue with SWAC and schedule their vote on the changes.

Major revisions (such as those which undertake actions outside of the 5 or 20 Year Plans, or alter the goals of the Plan) are termed “amendments” and would go through a full approval process (all cities and towns, the Washington Department of Ecology, plus Council).