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## **Questions and Responses**

Several questions were raised as part of the stakeholder review of the Ramsey and Washington Counties Designation Plan and respective amendments to its Solid Waste Master Plan. The questions, comments and input from all stakeholders has been recorded and has helped clarify the role of the Plans and operational impacts. The R&E Board appreciates and thanks the stakeholder that provided this input. The questions received are summarized below and a response provided.

### **1. Please clarify which waste streams will subject to designation. MSW from residential and commercial sectors? Construction and demolition debris (C&D), industrial waste (IW), or other waste streams?**

The State law relating to designation allows for designating certain solid wastes in addition to MSW, and the Designation Plan is reflecting this authorization. As a practical matter, the R&E Board expects that there will be sufficient MSW available, and the plan states that the Ordinances, when developed, will only designate Acceptable Waste from MSW. This includes MSW from both residential and commercial sectors.

Should there be a need for additional Acceptable Waste from MSW, the R&E Board could seek MSW from other counties, or negotiate delivery of Acceptable Waste from C&D or IW streams with haulers, or amend the ordinance to capture additional waste streams. Should the R&E Board and the Counties seek the latter, state law provides that there would be public input and MPCA review of any amendments to the designation ordinance.

The R&E Center is permitted to process "Acceptable Waste," which is not limited to MSW. The R&E Center is designed to process and handle Acceptable Waste, which includes some construction/demolition (C&D) waste and/or industrial waste (IW).

### **2. Does the Recycling & Energy Center (R&E Center) have capacity to process additional tonnages each year?**

The R&E Center is permitted to process 500,000 tons of waste per year, and has handled that amount in 2002. The R&E Center has been operating below that capacity. A target waste delivery number for the R&E Center has traditionally been at 420,000 tons per year. We believe the Facility will receive about 400,000 tons in 2016.

Of that 400,000 tons, about 335,000 tons will be Ramsey/Washington MSW, and 65,000 tons are expected to be from other counties. When RRT operated the Facility, it relied on waste from counties other than Ramsey and Washington. In 2015, 346,207 tons was from Ramsey/Washington, and 73,675 was from other Counties.

Under designation, all Ramsey/Washington MSW would be delivered to the Facility. If all of the 2015 Ramsey/Washington MSW had been delivered, the 444,000 tons could have been managed and processed into RDF without difficulty, and within the permit. The R&E Board under designation will no longer need to seek waste from other Counties, nor subsidize the procurement of that waste.

**3. What is the fate of the CEC and will the hauler rebate still be available?**

At this time the R&E Board anticipates that the hauler rebate will be phased out with the goal of having tipping fees covering the full cost of operations. The County Environmental Charge (CEC) is collected and administered by each County, and the rates are established by each County Board. Both Counties use the CEC for a number of waste related activities, one of which is support of the Joint Activities of the R&E Board, including the current Hauler Rebate of \$12.00 per ton. Any changes to the CEC will depend on what each County Board decides to do.

Under State law CEC funds can only be used for waste management purposes, essentially what is provided for in the counties' solid waste Master Plans. Both counties use the CEC to fund services, many of which are mandated, such as household hazardous waste collection and management, outreach and education, opportunity to recycle, certain regulatory activities, technical assistance, yard waste collection, administration, planning and policy development, and so on.

**4. How will tip-fees be set and when?**

One of the benefits of public ownership is the ability to better predict rates, and to have a public process in setting them. The R&E Board establishes the tipping fee. A specific policy has not been established for timing of fee setting, and input will be sought from the industry during contract negotiations and ordinance development. In the past, the policy was to give at least 90-days notice.

**5. How will transfer stations be used and identified once designation is in place?**

The R&E Board understands the importance of transfer stations in the system, that provide a benefit to haulers in routing and travel time, and to the R&E Center in terms of traffic volume. We are still working on the number of transfer stations needed. One option is to select a limited number of transfer stations under contract through a competitive process open to all. Another option is to offer a contract to any transfer station that will accept acceptable waste from Ramsey and Washington County from any hauler under contract to the R&E Board.

**6. How will designation impact the county's environmental and recycling goals?**

The Counties are mandated to achieve a 75% recycling goal by 2030. The evaluation of meeting that goal, which was prepared in 2014, looked at the current waste stream and current markets to determine that meeting the 75% goal will be very challenging. Regardless, the R&E Board knows that it will take a concerted effort by the public and private sector to meet this goal, through source separation and mixed waste processing (MWP) of the remaining waste to capture certain high value recyclables and organics that were not previously removed through source separation efforts.

Several fact sheets were developed during the evaluation to purchase the facility in 2015 that outline the R&E Board's position, support and investment on waste reduction, recycling, and environmental protection. Learn more at: <http://morevaluelesstrash.com/update/>.

**7. "Is the waste supply available to support the proposed system, or will the counties be put in a position here they will be searching for additional volume?" The question is in regards to the 940,000 total system tons that the designation plan states that is available for processing and**

**“10.6%, or 100,000 tons of unprocessed waste going to landfills”. “If total waste generation estimate is inaccurate, it would follow that the 100,000 tons for the system would be inaccurate.”**

- a. How were the assumptions derived?**
- b. How much MSW is generated in each county?**

The Plan uses rounded figures, based on the annual waste certification reports submitted by the counties to the MPCA. The source of MSW delivery data is from the facility in Newport, and reported by transfer stations and landfills to the Counties. For 2015 the summary of the reported data, for the two counties combined, are as follows:

2015 MSW Data in Tons from Certification Reports			
	Ramsey	Washington	Combined
<i>Residential</i>	117,296	36,099	153,395
<i>Commercial/industrial</i>	283,919	71,622	355,541
<i>Mechanical/hand-sort (recycling at Newport)</i>	10,916	2,893	13,809
Total recycled *	412,131	110,614	522,745
Delivered for processing	252,691	93,516	346,207
Actual MSW processed	232,286	87,248	319,534
<i>Unprocessed MSW to MN landfills</i>	51,569	11,643	63,212
<i>Unprocessed MSW to out-of-state landfills</i>	33,596	1,950	35,546
<i>Process residuals</i>	11,844	6,790	18,634
<i>Non-processibles/excess</i>	20,405	6,268	26,673
<i>Total landfilled from Newport</i>	32,249	13,058	45,307
Total of MSW land disposed	117,414	26,651	144,065
Total of MSW managed	728,155	214,821	942,976
* includes yard waste and brush for Ramsey County			

For the Plan, the 2015 figures were rounded, for example, the total waste managed was rounded to 940,000 and the unprocessed waste to landfills was rounded to 100,000 tons.

- c. How did the R&E Board get to its 86% landfill diversion rate? Should the rate be modified in the plan to reflect the current 89% diversion rate?**

The term “landfill diversion rate” is not defined in any reporting that is used by the MPCA, and there is not a standard formula. The R&E Board, for the designation plan used a diversion rate of 86% (85.65%), which was calculated based on 2014 data. The calculation for 2015 is slightly less, at 84% (84.72%). This is calculated by this formula:

$$\text{Landfill Diversion Rate} = \frac{(\text{Unprocessed MSW to Landfill (MN and out-of-state)} + \text{Process Residue} + \text{Non-Processibles})}{\text{Total MSW Managed}}$$

The plan was revised to reflect the 85% (rounded) figure for 2015.