



RAMSEY/WASHINGTON COUNTY

RESOURCE RECOVERY PROJECT

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**Request for Expressions of Interest
Regarding Organic Waste Transfer Station Capacity and Related Management Services**

**Addendum #1:
Project Board Response to Questions
January 10, 2012**

On December 23, 2011, the Ramsey/Washington County Resource Recovery Project Board (Project Board) released the Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) regarding organic waste transfer station capacity and related management services. This Addendum #1 to the RFEI was authorized by the Project Board as a response to the questions received from potential responders. Similar questions are grouped by topic to help the Project Board provide a better, more comprehensive response to related issues.

“Organic Waste” Specifications, Definitions; End – Use Preference

Q1. *What is the specification of the “organic waste” allowed to be handled at the transfer station? Will the material to be received at the transfer station be “post-consumer” organic waste or “pre-consumer”? For example, will the food waste be only from industrial and commercial food preparation scraps “before the plate” (e.g., food scraps from kitchen prep at the “back of the store”), or, will the material also include commercial and residential “after the plate” material (e.g., uneaten food scraps remaining after being served)?*

All foods are not acceptable at all final end-use facilities. For instance, meat scraps and meat trimmings are not usually acceptable at some compost sites and livestock farmers. These and other markets will have restrictions on what may be sent to their facilities. What is the Project Board’s definition of “organic waste” for the purposes of this RFEI?

Do the Counties have a preference or any requirements on where materials are to be marketed?

A1. The RFEI states that commercial, institutional and residential organic wastes may be allowed at the transfer station. Furthermore, the Project Board does not know at this time the quantity or composition of organic wastes that would be delivered to a transfer station(s).

The RFEI also states that the Project Board does not expect to contract directly with end users, such as livestock farmers or composters. The operator of the transfer station would be expected to make such arrangements.

Respondents are encouraged to suggest to the Project Board how best to plan for the different forms, types and sources of organic waste given the variety of end-use markets that are currently available and may be developed in the future. The Project Board has no restrictions at this time as to which end-use markets are proposed by respondents, as long as the processing/use facilities have all required approvals, permits, licenses, etc.

- Q2.** *Should the Counties first contract with end users (e.g., hog farmers, dried animal feed manufacturers, composters) of the organic waste and then, afterwards, contract with a transfer station operator(s) to supply those end users?*
- A2.** The RFEI states that the Project Board does not expect to contract directly with end users, such as livestock farmers or composters. The operator of the transfer station would be expected to make such arrangements. Respondents should answer the question: “Do you have any concerns with contracting directly with the end user?”
- Q3.** *Will the site be required to accept wastes dropped off by the public at this facility?*
- A3.** The Project Board is presently neutral with regard to drop off services for the residential public. Depending on the location of the transfer station, there may be a demand for drop-off services by individual residents or businesses that self-haul organic waste. Respondents are encouraged to address this issue in their response.
- Q4.** *Will the County allow a contractor to define the parameters of acceptable waste?*
- A4.** The Project Board does not have a current plan to allow the contractor to solely define the parameters of acceptable waste. Respondents should address this question in their responses. Responses should include the respondent’s preference for the respective roles of the Project Board vs. the contractor in specifying organic waste materials and management of feedstock quality.
- Q5.** *Is the intent of the organic waste transfer station concept to keep the materials as clean as possible and not commingled with yard waste or mixed municipal solid waste (MSW)?*
- A5.** The Counties intent is to have this transfer station(s) handle organic waste. Mixed MSW is not allowed. Receipt and transfer of grass and leaves, but not brush, may be considered by the Project Board if the respondent has a reasonable concept plan on how to handle these other materials at the facility.
- Q6.** *What are the current or existing agreements the Counties have entered into which either support the recycling of food waste or otherwise beneficially use leftover food?*
- A6.** The individual Counties have separate contracts with various providers of food rescue and recovery services. These include the following contracts:
- ◆ Second Harvest (edible food rescue by a non-profit food bank organization).
 - ◆ Separated food waste collection and recovery from selected County buildings (using the State of Minnesota cooperative purchasing contract with Barthold Recycling).
 - ◆ Various consultant contracts for research, planning, public education, outreach and technical assistance.

Phase – In of Multiple Types of Organic Waste

- Q7.** *Can respondents “phase in” the growth of their facility to handle a broader spectrum of organic waste over time? For example, could a respondent suggest restricting the material to just pre-consumer waste (e.g., industrial and commercial) for the initial phase and then include post-consumer waste (e.g., residential) at a later phase if the capacity and quality of material allows?*
- A7.** Respondents are encouraged to put together their best concepts for how to manage the broad spectrum of organic waste types. For example, a respondent may want to restrict the type of waste during an initial phase of operation to optimize profitability.

Roles for Designing, Building, Owning, and Operating the Facility; Exclusive Agreements

- Q8.** *Is the Project Board’s intention for one company to design, build, own and operate this transfer site?*
- Will the Project Board grant exclusive agreements for the operation of the facility and the shipment of waste into the facility?*
- A8.** The Project Board does not have a pre-conceived concept of whether one company or multiple companies will be involved in the designing, building, operation and maintenance of the transfer station. Respondents are encouraged to develop their own concepts for their project teams.

The Project Board does not have a pre-conceived concept of exclusive operating agreements. At this time, there are no draft contract specifications, scope of services, terms and conditions for the transfer station facility. Respondents are encouraged to develop their own concepts for their project operations, scope of service, and contract terms.

County Funding / Financing

- Q9.** *Will the Project Board or Counties be contributing any funds, grants or favorable tax treatment toward the design, development, construction or operation of the site?*
- Will the Project Board accept fee variations for different types and quantities of waste materials?*
- Will there be any type of subsidy or financial payment from the Project Board or Counties to the transfer station operator? If so, what form will this subsidy take?*
- A9.** The Project Board does not have a pre-conceived concept for the funding or financing of this transfer station. This is one of the key questions that the Project Board wants respondents to address in their responses.

The Project Board expects that the respondents will anticipate different types, quality, and quantities of organic waste. Respondents may wish to develop their own organic waste transfer/processing fee schedules. Project Board expectations for proposer fee schedule details may be addressed at a later stage if an RFP is developed and released.

Q10. *How will the County Environmental Charge (CEC) and State Solid Waste Management Tax (SWMT) apply to this organic waste material?*

A10. The CEC will continue to help fund the Counties' solid waste programs. Source separated organic waste that is collected separately for recovery currently is, and will continue to be, exempt from the CEC and Minnesota SWMT similar to the exemption for traditional recyclable materials (e.g., paper, cans, glass, plastics, etc.).

Roles in Regulation, Inspections

Q11. *What form of regulation and oversight will be imposed on the transfer station (TS) operator? What will be the roles of the Counties in this regulation and oversight?*

Will the Project Board help expedite permits?

Will the Project Board develop new regulations?

A11. It is likely that the Counties will have some role in monitoring and inspecting the organic waste transfer station. The exact nature of this oversight role is not yet defined.

The Project Board did not envision expediting state permits or local licenses when this RFEI was released. Nor are there any County plans at this time to develop new regulations. If any request for proposal (RFP) is developed at a later stage, the Counties' roles in permitting and regulation will be detailed further.

Roles to Protect Against Competition

Q12. *Is the Project Board willing to grant long term protection against the construction of competing facilities within the Counties?*

A12. No.

Exclusive (Sole Source of Supply) vs. Open to Others' Supplies

Q13. *Will the transfer station be required to be open to other haulers (e.g., merchant loads of organic waste)?*

Can a company be granted an exclusive right to use its own vehicles for all waste to be transported from the facility in the two county areas?

A13. The Project Board's intent is to maximize the potential for recovery of **new tons** of organic waste. Therefore, the Project Board intends that this transfer station would be open to merchant loads from other haulers.

The intent of this RFEI and the Project Board's new organic waste recovery programs are to target **new tons** of recoverable material that are currently being disposed of in the mixed MSW stream and NOT currently recycled. Respondents are encouraged to identify how their concepts will accomplish this preference for targeting **new tons**.

County Roles in Management and Oversight

Q14. *What roles will the Project Board and Counties play in terms of management and oversight of the transfer station?*

A14. The Counties anticipate the contractor will be responsible for management and oversight.

The RFEI identifies odor management as a primary concern in planning, design, construction, and operation of the transfer station. The Project Board will be looking for responses with facilities adequate to minimize release of nuisance/noxious odors.

Mandatory Source Separation Ordinance

Q15. *Will the Counties implement a source separation policy or ordinance similar to the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District's (WLSSD) program in the Duluth area which requires source separation of pre-consumer food waste from commercial establishments?*

A15. The Counties do not currently have any plans for the Counties to adopt mandatory source separation ordinances that would require commercial generators to sort out and recycle their organic waste.

Additional Recycling - Preference

Q16. *Will a preference be given to a firm that can provide additional recycling capabilities at the site?*

A16. This RFEI process will not involve a selection of vendor(s) at this stage and therefore there are no preferences at this time. If the process moves to an RFP, this question will be addressed at that time.

Respondents should consider other recyclable materials within the same general policy framework - the Project Board and the individual Counties are interested in developing programs to help recover **new tons** of materials, not simply redirect materials that are already being recycled.

Innovative Collection Concepts

Q17. *What if a company has an innovative collection program concept? Can collection issues be a part of their responses to the RFEI?*

A17. The Counties encourage respondents to consider innovative collection systems concepts. However, the focus of the RFEI is on the receipt and transfer of organic waste.

The respondents should anticipate that a variety of collection methods and truck types will be used. Therefore, the transfer station may need to accommodate a variety of vehicles and source separated organic materials.