

4 Solid Waste Reduction and Management Goals

North Carolina statutes requires that local governments make a good faith effort toward achieving the statewide goal of reducing per-capita solid waste disposed by 40%, as measured against the baseline year of FY 1991-92, (or an alternate year if approved by the State). However, the State also recognizes that circumstances arise over the course of time affecting the per-capita waste generation rate that may bear little relationship to the extent to which businesses, institutions, and residents make progress in implementing waste reduction programs. Increased waste due to hurricanes and other natural phenomena, growth in construction starts, establishment of refurbished or new manufacturing facilities, and an overall increase in the health of the economy are just a few such examples.

Rockingham County has experienced some such forces at play within its boundaries. Table 4-1 reflects the amount of solid waste that has been disposed of per-capita since the baseline year. In spite of expanded recycling and other waste diversion programs, the County as a whole experienced *increased* per-capita waste disposal rates of 14.5% by FY 95-96 and a 28.9% increase by FY 07-08 as reported in the 2009 Solid Waste Plan Update. Using data for FY 2010-11, the County solid waste disposal rate per-capita decreased to 0.94 tons or 13.3% above the FY 91-92 baseline rate. This per-capita disposal rate is based on the reconciled tonnage disposed and does not include the atypical contaminated soil/C&D waste from the Eden Duke Power Steam Plan which would contribute an additional 0.48 tons per capita of waste for FY 2010-11.

Table 4-1: Per Capita Solid Waste from Rockingham County Sources Disposed per Fiscal Year

Fiscal Year	Tons/Capita	% Waste Reduction
FY 91-92	0.83	Baseline
FY 95-96	0.95	-14.5%
FY 98-99	1.13	-36.1%
FY 01-02	1.04	-25.3%
FY 04-05	1.07	-28.9%
FY 07-08	1.07	-28.9%
FY 10-11	0.94	-13.3%

Source: NC Solid Waste Management Annual Reports

The State of North Carolina requires that each region covered by a solid waste management plan specify per-capita municipal solid waste reduction goals to be achieved by June, 30 2019 and by June 30, 2022, and that each plan be designed to achieve these goals. Based upon the nineteen year history presented in Table 4-1, expanded waste reduction programs currently implemented, limited funding available to each jurisdiction for dedicating to waste management issues, and the changing Rockingham County commercial/industrial base, it is improbable that the County will meet the State goal of 40% reduction in this plan period despite efforts to do so.

Rockingham County remains committed to waste reduction and will continue efforts to increase recycling, reuse, and reducing waste per capita as opportunities and increased funding become available.

In developing the 2009 Solid Waste Management Plan Update, Rockingham County jurisdictions established the following local goals:

- *Reduce the FY 01-02 per-capita solid waste disposal rate by 7% (or down to 17% above the baseline level) by June 30, 2016;*
- *Reduce the FY 01-02 per-capita solid waste disposal rate by 9% (or down to 14.5% above the baseline level) by June 30, 2019.*

Although, the County reconciled per capita waste generation rate decreased by approximately 12% over the past three years since adoption of the 2009 Solid Waste Plan, we believe much of this reduction resulted from a smaller waste stream due to slowed economic activity in Rockingham County. Based on the most recent ten year average (1.03), indications are these goals are still valid and will require concentrated efforts to expand/improve existing programs as well as development of additional diversion practices. The refocusing of efforts to generate economic growth and the replacement of structures created from industrial contraction in the County have overshadowed successful waste reduction efforts and are primarily contributors to the increased waste per capita. Rockingham County and its municipalities remain supportive of the original goals and believe that working to enhance waste diversion and recycling opportunities will enable continued progress toward goal attainment. *Based on these factors, Rockingham jurisdictions have agreed to extend existing numeric reduction goals to the new planning period:*

1. *Reduce the FY 01-02 per-capita solid waste disposal rate by 7% (or down to 17% above the baseline level) by June 30, 2019;*
2. *Reduce the FY 01-02 per-capita solid waste disposal rate by 9% (or down to 14.5% above the baseline level) by June 30, 2022.*

In addition to the above numeric goals, County jurisdictions will pursue the following goals:

- *Provide for solid waste collection service and disposal capacity to protect human health and the environment.*
- *Promote source reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, and mulching by residents, businesses, and institutions.*
- *Provide residents and businesses with access to recycling services and appropriate means of managing special wastes.*
- *Minimize costs while maintaining levels of service acceptable to service recipients.*
- *Comply with all state and federal solid waste management regulations.*

- *Ensure financing mechanisms are instituted and maintained to provide sufficient funds to meet existing and future solid waste management needs.*
- *Measure progress toward attaining local solid waste management goals, including results of both private and public sector waste reduction and diversion programs.*

Presented in Section 5, is a discussion of needs, opportunities, and actions related to the attainment of these goals.