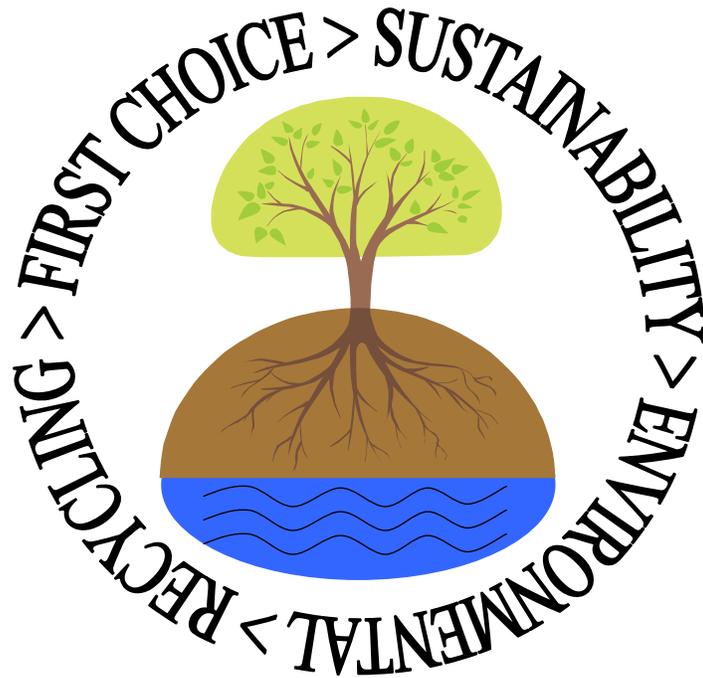


**Citizen's Recycling Advisory Committee  
Board of Supervisor's Report  
Short Term Recommendations**



**Submitted:  
January 13, 2010**

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# Member Listing

## Board Appointed Members:

**Brenda Robinson** – Bermuda District, Chair

President and CEO, Environmental Solutions, Inc.; founder of The Sustainability Park, an eco-industrial park dedicated to the promotion of sustainable growth

**Robert L. Dunn** – Bermuda District, Vice-Chair

Member and past chair, Central Virginia Waste Management Authority; retired DuPont Environmental and Community Affairs manager, thus proponent for sustainable growth and environmental stewardship

**Dave Anderson** – Midlothian District, Developer of Roseland in Midlothian and Matoaca Districts; a proponent of green development and sustainable living choices

**Leona Dooley** – Clover Hill District, Swift Creek Middle School teacher; proponent for recycling and recycling education

**Kathy Hostetler** – Midlothian District, past PTA president, Robious Elementary School; proponent for school recycling

**Marcia Phillips** – Midlothian District, member and current chair, Central Virginia Waste Management Authority; proponent for local recycling programs and environmental stewardship

**Erica Trout** – Matoaca District, Association Manager, Virginia Recycling Association; proponent for school recycling across the state

## Board Appointed Staff:

**Charles Dane** – Deputy Director, Department of General Services

**Kimberly Hynes** – Executive Director, Central Virginia Waste Management Authority

**Dr. Jeremy Lloyd** – Instructional Specialist K-12 Science, Chesterfield County Public Schools

## Support Staff:

**Howard Heltman** – Manager, Division of Waste and Resource Recovery

**Matt Harris** – Senior Budget Analyst, Department of Budget and Management

**Cindy Taylor** – Learning Consultant, Center for Organizational Excellence

**Karen Yuhase** – Administrative Analyst, Department of General Services

**Bernie Harris** – Operations Manager, Central Virginia Waste Management Authority

# Charter

The Citizen's Recycling Advisory Committee was created for the purpose of assisting the Board of Supervisors in evaluating options and allocating resources in accordance with a comprehensive integrated approach to recycling services delivered throughout the County. The committee was charged to provide a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors not later than January 15, 2010, on resource allocation, as well as new system and program development and alterations to existing programs.

## Methodology

1. Obtain and understand existing recycling programs in the county, to include program ownership, participation levels, costs and any other information deemed pertinent by the committee.
2. Research other program options or alternatives.
3. Benchmark program data to include type, participation, and costs.
4. Develop and submit recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on or prior to January 15, 2010.

## Objectives

1. The county recycling program does not consist solely of the curbside recycling program. It includes county drop-off centers, school PTA sites, convenience center recycling of goods and products not included in the CVWMA programs, and some recycling in county facilities such as libraries and parks. These programs must be viewed as a system, not individually. Synergies and complementary services must be considered to strengthen the overall recycling programs, and duplications or ineffective components having no real benefits should be reduced or eliminated. The committee needs to determine the best means of accomplishing a successful program in the most cost effective manner possible.
2. There is abundant evidence that the existing curbside program is not functioning optimally; therefore, it needs to be scrutinized closely to determine if increased

efficiencies and effectiveness can be identified and implemented. Participation rates and the overall cost of the programs are two areas of particular concern. Further, if alternative program choices are available, they too should be examined to determine the best overall method or methods for Chesterfield County.

3. The cost of the program is of concern, and other options need to be examined to determine if the existing program can be improved upon or changed to generate savings, while not adversely affecting the overall results or recycling in Chesterfield.
4. Setout rates and participation rates are not at a level that is considered acceptable with the tremendous financial investment being made by the county. Ways to increase participation need to be considered and developed.
5. Technologies and recycling markets have changed through the life of the existing programs, and those factors could be having a negative impact on the success of the program. These considerations need to be studied to assure we are using the best practices, and that we are not utilizing a service method simply because that is how it is currently provided.
6. The committee should have a recommendation for FY2011 submitted to the Board not later than January 15, 2010.

# Vision

Chesterfield County is a FIRST CHOICE community and strives to be the best place for businesses to thrive and citizens to live. Providing that FIRST CHOICE environment is not automatic - Chesterfield must "walk the talk" to actively ensure desired outcomes for its citizens. This requires us to continually adapt and make the necessary changes responding to economic, social, and environmental issues that will ensure this quality of life, not only for today, but for generations to come. Sustainability is a critical foundation from which to make these good decisions in the future because it seeks to both create both societal value and reduced environmental impacts in all that we do.

Environmental sustainability is a significant component of ensuring future success. Chesterfield strives to be a responsible leader and problem-solver in this arena, not just one of the pack following the latest trends. The way in which we use and protect our vital resources will have a significant impact on how well we sustain our high quality of life. As we grow in population as a county, our environmental footprint will grow and result in new challenges. Reduction of that footprint is a key priority for both the citizens of our county and its government. In all that we do as a citizenry, we must ask what impact we make environmentally in every decision.

Recycling and resource use programs are and will be important tools to improving the environmental footprint of our county. A sustained proactive effort, led by the county government, will provide not only physical improvements through reduced waste creation, but will also provide valuable educational opportunities for citizens to understand how they make a difference in making the county a FIRST CHOICE community through wise decisions that impact them close to home.

The Vision for Chesterfield's recycling programs, and the resulting recommendations found in this report, seeks to provide a road map to the long-term goals of waste reduction, air and water quality improvements, and heightened awareness of the citizens and businesses as to how they play a role in achieving environmental success. Citizens, seeking to know how localities differ so that they can make wise living choices, will recognize this Vision as an indicator of Chesterfield's commitment to long-term success and value creation. Businesses, looking for high

quality of life options for their employees, will recognize Chesterfield as a leader that seeks to help maximize economic value through the foundation of sustainable economic development. And when needed, this Vision will also provide an important tether to these goals when fiscal priorities may present challenges such as annual budget constraints.

Used as one of the county's core values, it is intended that this Vision will catalyze future generations of healthy recycling and waste reduction programs, and provide a footing for other improvements to help keep Chesterfield County as a leader in being an environmentally FIRST CHOICE community.

## **Guiding Principles**

1. A successful recycling program should be easy for citizens to use.
2. Communication and education of the public are essential to a successful program with emphasis on the benefits of the program.
3. A viable and effective program must be financially efficient.
4. A key program element should include an incentive focus for the users.
5. The county must provide leadership by having a comprehensive recycling program as a core element of how the county does business.
6. A successful recycling program requires consistency, uniformity, and sustainability.

## Recommendations

The Citizen's Recycling Advisory Committee appreciates the trust that the Board of Supervisors has placed in us to evaluate the current recycling programs and to make recommendations for the future. We have taken our charge seriously, and we have been diligent and thorough in our work to this point. The work of this committee has been extensive, and the amount of data and other information reviewed has been tremendous. The Citizen's Recycling Advisory Committee has met every other week since their June appointments to fulfill the charter as defined by the Board of Supervisors when they created this committee. However, we quickly realized that our task was much larger than can be appropriately addressed in the window of time we have been allotted.

Based on the Vision created by the committee, to be consistent with the qualities of a FIRST CHOICE community, we anticipate some short term and long term recommendations. **Accordingly, we would like to offer some short term recommendations, which could provide the Board with an option to address the current financial challenges, and request that the Board extend our charter through calendar year 2010.** This would provide us sufficient time to craft our comprehensive, long-term vision of the County's overall recycling program. The immediate recommendations and associated justifications are outlined below. If granted an extension, it is our intention to present the comprehensive report in July 2010.

- **The Committee recommends that the County institute a recycling fee.** County programs include: the curbside recycling program, the drop-off centers program at county sites and parks, and recycling programs at the county convenience centers. The direct fee will be a dedicated fund and is consistent with the current community environmental trends. For example, the County could charge each real estate parcel an annual fee for all recycling services. The cost per parcel to operate the proposed program is estimated to be \$22 per year.

This would provide the commitment to these programs for the long term and send a clear message to the public that the environmental stewardship provided by recycling is important to the county.

- **The committee recommends an expansion of the drop-off container program in a comprehensive county program.** A portion of these containers will be designated as a pilot program to educate and encourage expanded business participation in recycling. These containers can then be used by the general public, thereby providing more convenient recycling opportunities to apartment dwellers and other establishments. This offers extensive coverage for the County and functions as an educational opportunity for our future generations to improve on the programs. Drop-off centers could be established at schools or other sites that are well distributed geographically. We believe the programs should be uniform and provide more consistency. This approach will create a focused, countywide program.
- **The existing curbside program should be continued and offered to all single family households in the County.** The importance of this program is critical to Chesterfield as a FIRST CHOICE community, which suggests excellence in quality of life and environmental stewardship. Continual expansion of this program would send a signal that the County is a FIRST CHOICE community and could attract businesses and citizens who are interested in the quality of life of its residents and the protection of the environment.
- **The Committee feels that all current recycling programs offered at the county convenience centers should be maintained.** It is important that citizens have an opportunity to recycle products when possible rather than dispose of them in the waste stream.
- **The Committee recommends that the County partner with the school system to provide single stream recycling at each of the 64 school locations and the administrative buildings.** With approximately 7,500 employees and nearly 60,000 students, school recycling offers a great platform for directing change locally while educating children and their families. **We recommend the establishment of a sustainable schools committee to coordinate the recycling and sustainability efforts.**

## **Path Forward**

The Chesterfield Recycling Advisory Committee has evaluated the current recycling programs within the county and compared our programs to highly successful programs and the best practices across the United States. Based on extensive research, study, discussion and analysis, the committee has recognized that some key recommendations for Chesterfield's FIRST CHOICE community are not easily implemented in the short term considering the budgetary challenges within the county. However, we enthusiastically support a world class program that is consistent with the County's FIRST CHOICE Vision.

Thus, this report provides a short term recommendation with financial impact for the next budget and a request for extending the Committee's charter for the development of our recommendations for a long term strategy that places the County in a leadership position nationally. The additional time will allow the Committee to develop a comprehensive report that will incorporate best practices for a well defined strategy and timeline for implementation.

An example for further evaluation looks at optimization of the management of recycling and waste disposal programs. For example, highly successful programs have trash and recycling material pick up on the same day. Currently, there is no real financial incentive for residents, as they do not experience savings from recycling more and disposing of less waste. Some of the potential recommendations can and will have an environmental impact beyond recycling and waste disposal. Management of traffic flow and efficiencies of the program have a far reaching impact on recycling, landfill utilization and greenhouse gas emissions.

The Committee has carefully studied the issues of glass recycling, and we recommend that glass recycling continue as an integral part of the County's program. The Committee is developing a strategy with specific recommendations that will provide the County with a successful long term program that will be a showcase for recycling and will demonstrate how economic development success can result from cooperative efforts in accomplishing these goals.

Studies on who recycles and why they recycle indicate communication and publicity are critical. This is another area where we will be making specific suggestions.

Most schools have developed recycling programs; however, they are not uniform and consistent. Other schools have no program at all. To make the county a FIRST CHOICE community, all schools need to have the same approach to environmental sustainability and this represents an excellent opportunity for education and logistics for availability of recycling facilities.

As indicated above, the Committee has realized that additional time is essential to provide a comprehensive and quality set of recommendations. With the resources available within the county and the County's focus on making this a quality place to live and conduct business, we believe with the approval to further develop the program will advance the County to the forefront. The Committee requests an extension to deliver a high quality product and we anticipate these recommendations can be completed by July 2010.