

# Introduction

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## 1.1 Background and Purpose

The Sacramento Regional Solid Waste Authority (SWA) is a joint powers authority of Sacramento County (County), the City of Sacramento (City), and the City of Citrus Heights. Each of the member agencies shares the common need to manage garden refuse cost-effectively and responsibly as a significant part of its individual efforts to achieve the 50 percent diversion mandate of AB 939. Garden refuse is defined as the residential green waste collected by each of the member agencies within its jurisdiction. In May 2002, the SWA published the "Regional Green Waste Study," which concluded that "the community would be better served if local government took a more proactive and regional approach to managing green material processing operations" (SWA, 2002). The Regional Green Waste Study recommended that the SWA Board of Directors:

- "Design a green material processing facility within Sacramento County;
- Obtain the necessary operating entitlements;
- Establish the fees charged at the facility; and
- Operate the new SWA facility in partnership with private contractors."

To implement these recommendations, the SWA developed a multi-phased plan, consisting of:

- Phase One: Project Initiation
- Phase Two: Structuring and Designing the Project
- Phase Three: Facility Permitting and Contracting
- Phase Four: Final Design
- Phase Five: Construction
- Phase Six: Operational Startup

At its April 2003 meeting, the SWA Board authorized a contract with the consulting firm of CH2M Hill for Phase One of facility development, Project Initiation. This report summarizes the recommendations developed during Project Initiation in preparation for proceeding to Phase Two.

During Project Initiation, SWA and member agency staff developed the following statement of the need for and purpose of the new facility:

Together, the SWA members are collecting more than 175,000 tons per year of garden refuse and other green materials such as urban wood waste. Over 140,000 tons per year are being exported out of the County to processing contractors who make a variety of usable products, including compost, mulch, soil amendments, biomass fuel, and alternative daily cover for landfills.

*The SWA desires to manage and process garden refuse materials at a publicly owned facility in Sacramento County for the following reasons:*

- Enhance long-term system stability through stronger local control of garden refuse processing.
- Assure AB 939 diversion credits and compliance with state law.
- Avoid potential nuisance issues through responsible and accountable operations. Until now, the SWA member agencies have had to rely completely on privately owned and have operated facilities that have often had significant nuisance impacts on the community and that do not provide long-term system stability.
- Shorten the garden refuse haul distance to reduce overall processing and management costs and reduce environmental impacts (trip miles and air pollution).
- Increase accessibility of products to SWA member agencies.

*The SWA envisions the in-County facility to be operated through a Public-Private Partnership (P3), which will realize the following benefits:*

- Prudent long-term management of garden refuse in compliance with state law.
- Reliable, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible management of the garden refuse stream.
- Responsible operations and rapid management of nuisance problems to the satisfaction of the public. In the past, there has been no prompt and effective mechanism for local government to intervene and correct nuisance problems or regulatory compliance issues at privately owned and operated garden refuse processing facilities.
- Assurance of AB 939 diversion credits and control of the nature and quantity of material received.
- Opportunity for public education and awareness in sustainable waste management practices.
- Conversion of garden refuse into useful products.
- Private sector as operator for all materials processing and product marketing, to realize benefits of private-sector operational and sales capabilities.

Overall, the goal is to develop a garden refuse processing facility that will function well both economically and environmentally as part of the garden refuse management system within Sacramento County. Figure 1-1 shows Sacramento County and its cities. Figure 1-2 shows the principal elements of the current garden refuse management system used by the SWA member agencies; these elements are as follows:

**North Area Recovery Station (NARS):** Owned and operated by Sacramento County; receives garden refuse collected in unincorporated Sacramento County, the City of Citrus Heights, and the City of Sacramento; the garden refuse is then hauled by Grover Landscaping to its processing facility near Vernalis.

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**South Area Transfer Station (SATS):** Owned and operated by Sacramento County; receives garden refuse collected in the City of Sacramento; the material is then hauled by Grover Landscaping to its processing facility near Vernalis.

**Kiefer Landfill:** Owned and operated by Sacramento County; receives garden refuse collected in unincorporated Sacramento County for processing and use as alternative daily cover.

**Waste Management Recycle America:** Privately owned and operated; receives garden refuse collected in the City of Sacramento; the material is hauled away to processing/end use facilities.

**Elder Creek Recovery and Transfer Station:** Privately owned and operated; receives garden refuse collected in a small area of unincorporated Sacramento County; the material is then hauled away to a processing facility.

## 1.2 Phase One, Project Initiation: Approach and Contents

The approach for Phase One, Project Initiation, is to pursue the project on three tracks: public involvement, procurement, and planning.

- **Public Involvement:** The purpose of this track is to develop a plan for meaningful involvement of community stakeholders to build long-term support for the development and operation of a garden refuse processing facility that is cost-effective, considerate of neighbors, and environmentally beneficial.
- **Procurement:** The purpose of this track is to recommend the structure for the P3, including the roles and responsibilities for both the public and private partners. The public sector partners will be the SWA and its member agencies. The private sector partner will be selected through a procurement process that is described in this report.
- **Planning:** The purpose of this track is to recommend a preferred system configuration that uses elements of the current system while incorporating the new garden refuse processing facility. The planning track also contains a preliminary facility siting assessment that summarizes the results of previous siting studies and identifies general areas of the county that might potentially be suitable for siting the new facility. Finally, the planning track provides preliminary cost estimates for transporting and processing garden refuse under the preferred system configuration.

This Phase One report has the following structure:

**Executive Summary:** Contains the principal recommendations for moving forward with the project.

**Section 1:** **Introduction:** Explains the purpose of the project and provides background information about the existing garden refuse management system.

**Section 2:** **Public Involvement Plan:** Contains a general plan for stakeholder involvement during each phase of the project, with a more specific plan for stakeholder involvement during the facility siting process that is expected to be part of Phase Two of the project.

- Section 3:**                   **Recommended Public-Private Partnership Structure and Procurement Process:** Describes the process for arriving at the recommendations, and discusses the recommended P3 structure, the recommended roles of public and private partners, the recommended P3 contractual arrangements, and the responsibilities and commitments needed from the SWA and its member agencies. This section also describes the recommended procurement process, the procurement schedule in the context of the overall facility development schedule, the roles of the SWA Board and SWA staff during procurement, and the general contents of procurement documents including the contract between the SWA and the selected private partner. Involvement of potential private partners during the facility development and procurement process is also discussed.
- Section 4:**                   **Preferred System Configuration:** Describes the preferred system configuration, including the collection and delivery of garden refuse, the primary and secondary processing facilities, and potential product markets. Also discusses basic assumptions for facility sizing, technology, and design, and describes facility permitting requirements and regulatory trends.
- Section 5:**                   **Cost Review:** Presents a cost summary of the current system, with current costs for each member agency, and conceptual cost estimates for the preferred system. Also notes the most significant factors influencing the estimated costs.
- Section 6:**                   **Preliminary Siting Assessment:** Contains a preliminary siting assessment that identifies general areas of the County that may be potentially suitable for siting a regional garden refuse processing facility. Describes the preliminary siting criteria used to identify potentially suitable general areas and maps those criteria. Summarizes the results of previous siting efforts in Sacramento County and discusses pertinent ordinances and land use planning documents. No specific sites for a new facility are identified in this report.
- Section 7:**                   **References**

Each section of the report contains recommendations for moving the project ahead into Phase Two. Appendices to the report contain detailed information about aspects of the three tracks. Appendix 1A presents definitions of terms used in this report.

## 1.3 Project Team

The project team involves SWA and member agency staff, representatives of the Sacramento Cities/County Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC), and members of the consultant team of CH2M HILL, Integrated Waste Management Consulting, and California Waste Associates. Public agency staff and SWAC representatives are:

**Sacramento County Public Works Agency:**

Christina Ragsdale, Communication and Media Officer III  
Ruben Robles, Senior Civil Engineer, Water Quality Department

**Sacramento County Department of Waste Management and Recycling:**

David Pelser, Director  
Jim Howell, Operations Manager  
Douglas Kobold, Solid Waste Planner  
Pat Quinn, Planning Program Manager  
Dan Regan, Communication and Media Officer II  
Chris Richgels, Principal Civil Engineer

**City of Sacramento Solid Waste Division:**

Harold Duffey, Division Manager  
Colleen Laubinger, Integrated Waste Planning Superintendent  
Mike Root, Program Analyst

**City of Citrus Heights:**

Mary Poole, Management Analyst II

**SWAC:**

Evan Edgar, Sacramento County Representative  
Patrick Maxfield, SWAC Vice Chairman and City of Folsom Representative  
Mark White, City of Sacramento Representative

Consultant team representatives are:

**CH2M HILL:**

Jill Sideman, Project Manager  
Janet Goodrich, Assistant Project Manager  
Jan Allen, Senior Green Materials Technologist  
Bob Gore, Government Relations Specialist  
Rachel Hanson, Project Engineer  
Doug Herbst, Senior Public-Private Partnership Specialist  
Jodi Ketelsen, Public Involvement Specialist

**Integrated Waste Management Consulting:**

Matt Cotton, Principal

**California Waste Associates:**

Jim Greco, Principal