

Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)
October 24, 2019, 1:00 – 3:00 pm
MassDEP, One Winter Street, Boston, MA
Meeting Summary

Marianna McCormick of MassDevelopment presented on potential funding options for recycling-related businesses.

Q: Has MassDevelopment worked with solid waste and recycling companies in the past?

A: We have worked with GreenWorks, Waste Management and Casella to name a few. We have also worked with C&D processors.

Q: What can solid waste companies use the loans/bonds/guarantees for?

A: They can use them for hard assets such as equipment and land leasing.

Q: You mentioned that \$1.5 million is the sweet spot for seeing a good return on investment. Does this vary among MassDevelopment's different pillars?

A: There is more flexibility for nonprofits looking for \$900k or above. For solid waste and recycling businesses, the money starts making sense around \$1 million. For smaller projects, the guarantees will help, and in some circumstances, MassDevelopment will lend their own money.

Q: A lot of C&D processors send wood and glass to Canada. Would that qualify them for the export loan?

A: Yes, definitely.

Q: Does MassDevelopment loan money for innovative projects? Or are you just looking for a solid return on investment?

A: We can lend based on projections if the technology is proven and it will create jobs and bring other advantages to the Commonwealth.

C: Most MRFs are looking for funding for optimization, which might not fall into the existing categories.

R: Ultimately, the relationship is with the bank, and we make some money off of the fees that then feeds into our own funds. Through this we are able to finance interesting projects, if they have a good story.

Q: How do you want "good stories" presented?

A: Call MassDevelopment and share your story over the phone. Good stories are in gateway cities, promote job creation, and benefit the community.

Q: MassDEP has done a lot of work with solar panels on closed landfills. There are some that don't have solar panels, but they are the right size and could be developed for solar.

A: This comes up a lot. We haven't quite figured out how to wrap it into the commercial property assessed clean energy (CPACE) discussion. We're cautiously rolling out the CPACE program, starting with commercial entities and then moving into nonprofits.

Q: What is MassDevelopment's experience interfacing with DCAMM?

A: We do some infrastructure financing. If you reach out directly, we can put you in touch with the right person.

Q: What are the parameters around infrastructure financing?

A: We played a role in Assembly Row and Northpoint. The best place to start is with District Improvement Financing (DIF).

Lauren Potter of the Center for EcoTechnology provided updates on the Recycling Works in Massachusetts and Green Team programs for state fiscal year 2019.

Q: What does "additional diversion" mean in the report?

A: We determine how many tons of material a program will keep out of the waste stream in future years.

Q: What percentage of your work is tied to Berkshire County?

A: We can look into this further.

Q: Do Boards of Health approve of "bring your own container" programs?

A: It's our understanding that they do approve. In this case study, customers are serving themselves so personal containers also are not going behind the counter. We can't speak for the Boards of Health but we have not heard concerns about this ourselves.

Q: Are you working with producers and manufacturers to reduce single-use plastic?

A: Yes. A few companies have reached out to learn more about designing packing with recycling in mind and are thinking about downstream impacts.

Q: Are there obstacles to schools buying reused furniture due to funding?

A: We are working on adapting guidance aimed at K-12 schools, as they usually do not fall into the commercial/institutional audience that RecyclingWorks focuses on.

Q: Does the number of commercial organics customers include haulers who subcontract their organics collection routes out?

A: Our numbers most likely account for these customers, but it's unclear if the primary or subcontractor would report the data.

C: RecyclingWorks' work shows just how ambitious we can be for the future.

C: In the graphic about bottle recycling, there is no differentiation between deposit and non-deposit bottles. Please add this.

Q: We have seen a rise in shellfish shells (e.g., oysters, mussels, clams), and no composters want them. They are also bad for AD. Is this something Recycling Works has encountered?

A: This has come up. Recycling Works could look at the issue through compost site technical assistance, but I don't have the answers at the moment.

C: There was a project in Florida where a foundation funded a grant for people to collect the shell waste, take it to an intermediate site, and load it onto a barge to return them to the ocean.

R: There is a grant-funded organization in Maine that is doing a similar project.

R: There is also a nonprofit on the Cape that is working on this too, but they need a hauler to collect the material from across the state.

Q: Is there any additive that could be added to neutralize the smell of shells?

A: We try to stay away from additives, as they are usually not worth the money. There is also a market for hard shells to be sold as permeable surface cover.

Erin Victor from MassDEP shared information about MassDEP's forthcoming Source Reduction and Reuse Working Group.

Q: How does the working group relate to the Master Plan?

A: The Master Plan outlines some actions we want to take, but we want to go deeper. This group is going to work on a Strategic Plan to establish a comprehensive approach to achieve the goals outlined in the Master Plan, similar to the existing Organics Action Plan.

C: As a consumer, I can make decisions about what I buy and reduce what goes into my trash bin. This is a bigger dialogue when thinking about the whole manufacturing industry. Light-weighting and source reduction at the manufacturing level should be acknowledged too.

Greg Cooper from MassDEP spoke about proposed regulatory changes specific to the waste ban for organic material.

Q: Is there any thought to refining the scale of fines for violating the bans? The ban doesn't take into account the difference between manufacturers and the small businesses.

A: We are having discussions about penalty buckets. When doing enforcement, we have a standard base penalty and the ability to adjust the penalty based on various factors, one of which is economic. To date, most enforcement has been on larger generators, where we have only used economic factors to build a greater penalty. But we do have some flexibility to adjust the penalty amounts.

Q: How are school districts treated? Is each school counted separately, or managed centrally? It seems to make sense to collect together, but this does not appear to be MassDEP's model.

A: Typically the ban threshold would be based on the material collected at each separate location. A school district could choose to have food waste collected at one central location, in which case the ban threshold would apply based on the food waste in the trash from that location.

Q: Do solid waste facilities have to file new waste ban compliance plans?

A: Yes, this would be required after the regulations are promulgated.