



**RAMSEY/WASHINGTON
RECYCLING & ENERGY**
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

Ramsey County Board Workshop date: Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Subject: Solid Waste Governance Evaluation

Submitted by: Trista Martinson, Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board Executive Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) conducted a preliminary analysis of solid waste governance, updating previous exploration of this topic in 2014. This effort examined governance models to best protect over 50 years of county investment in the shared solid waste management system and advance the ambitious goals of each county's Solid Waste Management Plans. At its January 29, 2026, workshop, the R&E Board directed staff to present the findings to both county boards. Staff will request board direction on initiating a tri-entity evaluation of governance options to enhance the prevention, diversion and management of waste to maximize community, economic and environmental benefits.

This workshop's purpose is to inform Ramsey County commissioners of the preliminary analysis of waste governance options for efficient and effective waste prevention, diversion and management programs, operations and systems in Ramsey and Washington Counties. The policy basis for this work originated from chapter three, policy six in the Counties' Solid Waste Management Plan (approved by each county in fall 2024) and strategic initiative 4A.i in the R&E Strategic Plan (approved in fall 2025).

Staff will use the commissioner discussion and feedback from this workshop to proceed with next steps, as directed, in the governance evaluation. The policy question for discussion is:

Should the Ramsey County Board direct county staff to work with R&E to evaluate potential governance structures for joint solid waste management, including the status quo, an enhanced joint powers agreement and/or a solid waste management district?

The attachments provided with this item present the findings from staff's initial analysis of this topic, intended to equip commissioners with key insights to guide informed discussions and strategic next steps.

Workshop Outline

1. Introduction
 - a. Background and history
 - b. Previous governance analyses
2. 2025 preliminary governance analysis findings
 - a. Regional entity case studies
 - b. Governance options comparison
 - i. Status quo (current JPA)
 - ii. Enhanced JPA
 - iii. Solid waste management district
3. Discussion on potential joint evaluation of governance
 - a. Governance dimensions of evaluation
 - b. Governance evaluation process and timeline
 - c. Commissioner discussion of policy question

Ramsey County Board Workshop: Solid Waste Governance Evaluation

ATTACHMENTS:

1. R&E Staff memorandum: Preliminary Analysis of Solid Waste Management Governance
2. HDR report: Alternative Governance Case Studies
3. Examples of Regional Governance Systems in Minnesota
4. Husch-Blackwell memorandum: Potential Future Governance Options Analysis
5. Governance Comparison Table
6. History of Ramsey and Washington Counties' Joint Work on Solid Waste Management
7. R&E Governance Decision Tree (revised from January 29, 2026 R&E Board meeting)