

**Subject: DES: Recycling**

**FY 2023 Proposed Budget  
Budget Work Session Follow-up**

**3/18/2022**

The following information is provided in response to requests made by Ms. Garvey and Mr. Dorsey at the work session on 03/03/2022, regarding the following questions:

*1) The budget notes on page 412 that facilities such as the Detention Facility and County parks are high performers with respect to recycling; can you provide more details on this statement?*

*2) Are the performance measures “County’s overall recycling and diversion rate as confirmed by Virginia Department of Environmental Quality” on page 411 and the “Percent of waste recycled from Arlington County Agencies” on page 412 calculated the same way? If so, why are we estimating a decrease in the percent of waste recycled from Arlington County Agencies from FY 2021 to FY 2022?*

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1) The performance measure “Percent of waste recycled from Arlington County Agencies” peaked in FY 2021 at 54% because our high performers, the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Detention Center, were operational, while other facilities were closed due to the pandemic. Therefore, the relatively high recycling rates from these programs/buildings had the effect of boosting the overall rate.

Compared to other County facilities, DPR and the Detention Center have higher recycling rates due to the organic waste produced by both of these programs/facilities. DPR receives recycling credit for organic material such as trees, leaves and brush removed from the County parks, which is composted. The large amount of organic material removed from parks throughout the County boosts DPR’s overall recycling rate. Similarly, the Detention Center is the only County facility with food scraps collection, which amounts to roughly 1000 lbs./month of organics – driven by the meals provided to inmates -- which are diverted from the trash and composted. This serves to boost the Detention Center’s recycling rate.

<b>Supporting Measures</b>	<b>FY 2018 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2019 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2020 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2021 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2022 Estimate</b>	<b>FY 2023 Estimate</b>
Percent of waste recycled from Arlington County Agencies	44%	44%	44%	54%	45%	45%

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2) The two metrics below are not calculated the same way. The County’s recycling rate is governed by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality based on a prescribed formula, which includes data from many governmental and commercial data sources. On the other hand, the County facility recycling rate is based on our own internal data.

The overall County rate is bolstered by the single-family residential sector, which is a component of the County’s overall recycling rate and has a recycling rate of approximately 61%. Although DPR and the Detention Center generate a significant amount of organic material, most other County facilities (e.g., libraries, community centers) do not. Conversely, the single-family residential sector generates significant amounts of yard waste, leaves, and brush which adds a "recyclable" tonnage and boosts the recycling rate. Another, albeit smaller, factor in the different rates is that single-family homes generally do better at recycling traditional recyclable materials (paper, cardboard, aluminum, plastic). This is likely because this is a more stable group of users and so it is easier for them to use their home recycling system correctly. A wide variety of people and groups use County facilities on a daily basis, which makes it more challenging to educate them on the proper usage of the recycling system in County facilities.

<b>Critical Measures</b>	<b>FY 2018 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2019 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2020 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2021 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2022 Estimate</b>	<b>FY 2023 Estimate</b>
County's overall recycling and diversion rate as confirmed by Virginia Department of Environmental Quality	49.0%	50.2%	50.8%	51.2%	51.8%	52.6%

<b>Supporting Measures</b>	<b>FY 2018 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2019 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2020 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2021 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2022 Estimate</b>	<b>FY 2023 Estimate</b>
Percent of waste recycled from Arlington County Agencies	44%	44%	44%	54%	45%	45%