2012 SWANA Excellence Award Nomination

Southwest County Transfer Station

Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County
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Executive Summary

Opening in July 2011, the Southwest County Transfer Station (SWCTS) is the newest of the six transfer stations operated by the Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County (Authority). It is designed to receive an average of 1,000 tons per day of solid waste and recyclables. Located on a 40-acre site, the SWCTS also includes a household hazardous waste processing facility and a full-service vehicle and equipment maintenance facility. Having the SWCTS in operation is estimated to save Authority customers in southwestern Palm Beach County approximately $1 million per year in franchise collection fees by reducing collection vehicle mileage by an estimated 2.2 million miles per year.

The SWCTS is a state-of-the-art facility with many technical innovations. However, it is the customer-friendly layout and the campus-like setting that sets the SWCTS apart. The Authority has also made a substantial investment at the SWCTS to protect the surrounding environment and to be a good neighbor in the community. Strategic siting of the facility and creative site planning have essentially eliminated the potential for impacts due to odor and noise, and architectural designs and landscaping plans were developed such that the facility blends in with existing development in the area.

1. Design of the Facility

The Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County (Authority) operates an integrated solid waste management system (System) that is responsible for the processing, recycling and disposal of over 2 million tons of solid waste, household hazardous waste and recyclables collected in Palm Beach County, FL each year. The Authority’s System consists of a 1,600 ton per day waste-to-energy (WTE) plant, Class I and Class III landfills, a state-of-the-art Recovered Materials Processing Facility (RMPF), a household hazardous waste (HHW) processing facility, a vegetation waste processing facility, six transfer stations, and various maintenance and other ancillary support facilities. The Authority also operates a biosolids pelletizing facility, fueled by landfill gas, to serve wastewater treatment plants in Palm Beach County. The six transfer stations are located strategically throughout Palm Beach County to reduce the fees paid to franchise haulers collecting waste materials and recyclables from the approximately 1.3 million residential and commercial customers in Palm Beach County. Approximately 70 percent of all solid waste and recyclables collected in Palm Beach County pass through one of the Authority’s transfer stations.

The Southwest County Transfer Station (SWCTS) is the newest of the Authority’s six transfer stations. It was constructed to provide the capacity required to serve a growing population in the southwestern portion of Palm Beach County and reduce the waste load delivered to the Authority’s South County Transfer Station in Delray Beach which is limited in capacity because of site constraints. Franchise haulers were experiencing delays at this facility and were projecting future collection cost increases as a result. The opening of the SWCTS in July 2011 allowed the South County Transfer Station to be taken off-line for renovation and will eliminate the delays that were being experienced there in the past. Traffic congestion on major roads leading to the South County Transfer Station will also be reduced as a result of the SWCTS being in operation.
The following paragraphs provide information on the design of the SWCTS and how it has been integrated into the Authority’s System as a whole.

1.1 Design of the Transfer Station

The primary function of the SWCTS is to accept municipal solid waste (MSW), clean vegetative waste and source separated recyclables for transport in larger transfer vehicles to the Authority’s North County Complex on Jog Road for processing or disposal. A HHW drop-off area is also located on the site, but is separated from other waste transfer operations to facilitate ingress/egress by small delivery vehicles and to reduce traffic volumes through the interior of the transfer station site.

1.1.1 Design Criteria

Design of the SWCTS was based upon projected waste generation in the southwest Palm Beach County service area through the year 2030. Table 1 summarizes the projected tonnages and number of delivery vehicles used in the design of the SWCTS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Average Year</td>
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<td>Maximum Day</td>
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<td>Peak Hour</td>
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<td>Delivery Vehicles</td>
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<td>Average Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peak Hour</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Average annual waste tonnage for the SWCTS service area was determined using the Authority’s Traffic Analysis Zone Population Model and Landfill Depletion Model which relate existing and future population figures to waste tonnage based on historical data compiled by the Authority over more than 25 years of System operations. The maximum day tonnage was derived using a factor of 1.5 times the average day tonnage. Peak hour tonnage was based on 25 percent of the maximum day tonnage.

Projections of the average number of waste delivery vehicles entering and leaving the SWCTS were based upon an assumed average payload of 4 tons per delivery vehicle. This assumption was made after reviewing scale house records from other Authority transfer stations. The projected number of waste delivery vehicles entering and leaving the SWCTS under peak hour conditions was determined by assuming a payload reduction to 3 tons per delivery vehicle during heavy traffic volume periods due to the increased number of small quantity generators and self-haulers during these periods.

1.1.2 Transfer Station Siting

The SWCTS is located on a 40-acre site in southwestern Palm Beach County that was originally part of land purchased by the County using environmental bond funds and designated as an Agricultural Reserve. Accordingly, use of the land for a transfer station required an amendment to the County’s Comprehensive Plan. Because the benefits of the transfer station to the surrounding community and to the Authority’s System as a whole were well recognized, both the Board of County Commissioners and
the state of Florida approved the amendment, allowing the County to sell the property to the Authority and the project to move forward.

The SWCTS site is located on the east side of U.S. Highway 441 and State Road 7 (SR-7), a 4-lane divided highway and a major north-south corridor through western Palm Beach County. This site was selected because of its availability, its proximity to Florida’s Turnpike, located less than 2 miles to the east, and the capacity of existing connector roads in the area to support the projected increase in traffic. Most vehicles delivering waste and recyclable materials to the SWCTS approach the facility from the east using Atlantic Boulevard to SR-7 south of the site or Boynton Beach Boulevard to SR-7 north of the site. Most transfer vehicles leaving the site use Boynton Beach Boulevard to access Florida’s Turnpike for the 20-mile trip to the Authority’s North County Complex on Jog Road where the WTE Plant, Class I and Class III landfills, RMPF and composting facilities are located. Travel times to and from the SWCTS to the Authority’s North County Complex range from about 25 to 40 minutes depending on traffic conditions. The location of the SWCTS in relation to the Authority’s other transfer stations and North County Complex on Jog Road is presented in Figure 1.

To access the SWCTS site from SR-7, a bridge was constructed over the Lake Worth Drainage District’s L-31 Canal, which runs north/south along the east side of SR-7. A median cut and acceleration and
deceleration lanes were also constructed within FDOT’s right-of-way for SR-7 to allow traffic to enter the site from either the north or the south and to exit the site heading either north or south. FDOT determined that signalization on SR-7 at the entrance to the SWCTS site was not required at this time.

1.2 Merits of the Facility

Because the Authority’s System has grown significantly in size, it has become more time consuming and costly to provide certain System-wide support services, such as vehicle and equipment maintenance, from a single location at the North County Complex on Jog Road. With the development of the SWCTS project, the Authority saw an opportunity to relieve some of the load on these facilities, and in so doing, increase System efficiency and reduce costs to its customers. The Authority’s vision for the SWCTS project was to develop a campus-like facility that would include not only transfer operations for solid waste and recyclables, but also HHW and maintenance facilities that would complement similar facilities at the North County Complex. In keeping with this concept, the SWCTS facility includes the following primary elements:

- Scale house
- Administration Building
- Transfer Building
- Vegetative Waste Transfer Area
- HHW Building
- Satellite Equipment Maintenance Building

The layout of the SWCTS site is presented in Figure 2. Traffic flow from the site entrance through the Transfer Building and back out of the site is by means of a perimeter, counterclockwise loop that keeps traffic moving in the same direction and significantly reduces the number of vehicle crossing points. Although there are a number of potential merge points, both collection and transfer vehicles can make complete loops around the site, from entrance to exit, without having to cross any traffic intersections. The HHW Building has been placed near the site entrance to separate these delivery vehicles from the main transfer station traffic. The same is true for traffic accessing the Satellite Equipment Maintenance Building. These vehicles can access the main transfer station site through an access control gate, if necessary, but under normal circumstances would not need to unless they were part of SWCTS operations.

To facilitate the flow of main transfer station traffic through the site, a parking area for equipment trailers is provided near the site entrance, just north of the HHW Building. This area is intended for commercial landscapers and other small quantity generators to drop off equipment trailers (mowers, etc.) while they unload waste at the transfer station. This feature reduces the length of queuing lines at the scales as well as traffic congestion on the tipping floor or vegetative waste load-out area.

The following paragraphs provide a brief discussion of the merits of each primary element of the SWCTS facility.

1.2.1 Scales and Scale Houses

The SWCTS has two scale houses, Scale House A and Scale House B. Scale House A has an area of 780 square feet. Scale House B has an area of 580 square feet. There are three 70-foot long scales: one in-bound scale on the south side of Scale House A, one out-bound scale on the north side of Scale House B, and one bi-directional scale between the two scale houses. The scales and scale houses are covered
Figure 2. Southwest County Transfer Station Site Plan
by a canopy with a sunshade area of 1,875 square feet and a clearance of 26 vertical feet above the scale deck. Traffic control lights (open/closed lanes) and radiation detectors are also provided at the scale houses.

The computer hardware and software used in the scale houses is the same as that used in other Authority facilities to ensure data compatibility and consistency in data reporting. Both scale houses have raised floors to facilitate access to the electronics cabling below. A radio frequency identification (RFID) system for vehicle identification is planned for the future, so each scale house is equipped with spare conduit for this purpose.

1.2.2 Administration Building

The Administration Building is a two-story structure located adjacent to the west side of the Transfer Building and facing SR-7. The Administration Building can be accessed from the outside or from the inside through the Transfer Building at either the tunnel (ground) or tipping floor levels. The ground floor of the Administration Building includes space for future personnel offices, an electrical room, an equipment storage and maintenance room, and a computer room which can be used as a remote Emergency Operations Center for the Authority. The second floor includes administrative offices, restroom and locker room facilities, and a large lunch room which can also be used for training purposes. The Administrative Building was designed for public access and is equipped with exterior stair wells as well as an elevator to assure compliance with ADA requirements.

1.2.3 Transfer Building

The Transfer Building is a two–story pre-engineered metal structure. Delivery vehicles use an inclined ramp on the south end to enter the Transfer Building at the tipping floor level. Solid waste and source separated recyclables are unloaded on the tipping floor. Delivery vehicles leave the Transfer Building by an inclined ramp on the north end of the building that returns them to the ground level to allow them to exit the site through the Scale House the same way they entered. Spotters on the tipping floor assure safe and efficient movement of vehicles through the Transfer Building. Although rarely needed, there is approximately 2,000 feet of queuing distance between the Scale House and the entrance to the Transfer Building tipping floor. This allows for over 50 collection vehicles to be in the queue, if that were ever necessary.

Solid waste and recyclable materials that are unloaded on the Transfer Building tipping floor are pushed through cut outs in the floor (load-out hoppers) into 100-cubic yard, open top transfer trailers on the ground (tunnel) level below. The load-out hoppers are cladded with ¾-inch steel plate and sloped down from the tipping floor to match the open top dimensions of the transfer trailers. Curbing is provided on the tunnel level to allow transfer truck drivers to align the top of the trailer with the bottom of the load-out hopper. Brushes mounted to the bottom of the load-out hopper cladding are used to reduce the amount of debris falling in the tunnel traffic lanes during trailer loading operations. A hydraulic excavator, with a small clamshell bucket attachment, is used to reach down into the trailer from the tipping floor level to spread out and compact the waste. Truck mounted scales, connected to scoreboards mounted over each load-out hopper, allow
excavator operators to know when the allowable 80,000-pound highway load limit is being approached. When the trailer is full, it is driven out of the tunnel and across an unattended scale. If the load is overweight, the truck is returned and some material is removed. If the load is within the allowable maximum weight, it is driven to its final destination.

Significant design features of the Transfer Building at the SWCTS include the following:

1. Galvanized (unpainted) steel building members and stainless steel roof and wall fasteners to reduce long-term maintenance costs.
2. 50,000 square feet of building floor space, including six (6) load-out bays and 30,000 square feet of tipping floor area for unloading and storage of solid waste and recyclable materials.
3. Push walls on the north, south and east sides of the tipping floor area, with ½-inch steel cladding to a height of 6 feet above floor level.
4. Tipping floor consisting of a 12-inch thick structural concrete slab overlain by a 6-inch thick, high strength (silica fume) concrete wearing surface. The wearing surface is not bonded to the structural slab below to reduce the cost and down time associated with periodic removal and replacement.
5. Skylights in the roof and translucent wall panels to provide natural light to the tipping floor work area.
6. A misting system for dust control on both the tipping floor and tunnel levels of the building.
7. A wet pipe fire protection system, including fire flow booster pump, for both the tipping floor and tunnel levels of the building. Fire alarm devices and sprinkler heads located throughout the facility. An Inergen (clean agent) fire suppression system in the electrical room.
8. Wash down hoses and racks and emergency showers and eye wash stations positioned at strategic locations around the perimeter of the tipping floor area.
9. A central compressed air system to provide power to maintenance system lubrication pumps and air to outlets for maintenance tools around the Transfer Building.
10. A maintenance lubrication dispensing system consisting of a 275-gallon hydraulic fluid tank, a 275-gallon lube oil tank, and a 55-gallon grease barrel, each provided with double-wall construction and fitted with a filter/regulator, an air powered pump, 50-foot hose reel and control handle.
11. Heating and air conditioning systems for administrative and personnel areas and automatically controlled, motorized exhaust fans for intermittent ventilation of other operational areas of the building per Florida Building Code requirements.
12. A 2000-kilowatt (2,500 kVA) emergency generator to provide electricity to the entire campus, including the Transfer Building, Scale Houses and related support systems in the event of a power failure.

1.2.4 Vegetative Waste Transfer Area

The SWCTS is designed with an outside vegetative waste transfer area that allows vegetative waste to be loaded into transfer trailers on the west side of the Transfer Building when heavy traffic or waste load conditions on the tipping floor require it. The vegetative waste transfer area is a 200-foot by 200-foot slab of high strength silica fume concrete with an elevated concrete platform for a hydraulic excavator to move on. Vehicles delivering vegetative waste to the SWCTS unload on the west side of this platform and transfer vehicles park on the east side of the platform. The excavator operator picks up the waste material on one side of the platform and swings over to the other side of the platform to place and
compact it in the transfer trailers. A front-end loader is used to move vegetative waste near the elevated platform so that the excavator can pick it up. Having the outside transfer area for vegetative waste provides the SWCTS operations staff additional flexibility to manage the flow of waste through the facility to maximize efficiency.

1.2.5 Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Building

The HHW Building at the SWCTS is a 100-foot by 100-foot pre-engineered metal building with a 40-foot by 100-foot canopy on the south side for use as a drive-through customer drop-off area. The drop-off area contains four storage cabinets where customers can deposit HHW materials, including paints, flammables, oil filters, batteries, electronics, propane cylinders, etc., and tanks for used motor oil and antifreeze. In fact, the only hazardous materials that are not accepted are explosives, radioactives, medical waste and pharmaceuticals.

The HHW Building at the SWCTS is designed to serve as a counterpart to the Authority’s HHW storage and processing facility at its North County Complex on Jog Road. As such, the HHW Building is staffed on a full-time basis with four Authority employees and receives HHW materials from drop-off centers at other transfer stations that previously would have gone to the North County facility. Having a second HHW storage and processing facility available within the Authority’s System provides operations staff with additional capacity and flexibility to manage the increasing quantity of HHW material collected in Palm Beach County each year. The Authority collected approximately 2.8 million pounds of HHW material in FY 2010/2011.

The layout of the HHW Building includes an office area, a general work area, flammable and non-flammable material storage areas, an employee lunch room, a laboratory for testing and storage of special wastes, and restroom facilities with lockers and showers. The building has its own HVAC systems, including exhaust fans with the capacity to make multiple air changes per minute from within the material handling and storage areas of the building, if necessary. HHW materials are stored on pallet racks within the building and loaded onto trucks by fork-lift for transport off-site for further processing, recycling or disposal. A recessed truck ramp and loading dock is provided on the east side of the building for this purpose. Flammable materials are loaded out on the west side of the building directly from their designated storage room. This load-out area also has secondary containment for spill control.

1.2.6 Satellite Equipment Maintenance Building

The Satellite Equipment Maintenance Building is a pre-engineered metal building with approximately 3,000 square feet of administrative office and spare parts storage area and approximately 11,000 square feet of maintenance work area. Like the HHW Building, the Satellite Equipment Maintenance Building is designed similarly to its larger counterpart facility at the Authority’s North County Complex on Jog Road. Until the SWCTS was opened, all vehicle and equipment maintenance was performed at that
location. With this facility in operation, vehicles and equipment requiring maintenance can be taken to
either location, reducing down time.
The structural design of the Satellite Equipment Maintenance Building is
similar to that previously described for
the Transfer Building. Primary members
of the structural frame are galvanized
(unpainted) steel. The roof is a factory
insulated standing seam roof with
stainless steel fasteners. The
administrative area of the building
includes personnel offices, restroom
facilities with showers and lockers, a
lunchroom facility and spare parts
storage area. The parts storage room
has window access to the maintenance
bays to allow mechanics to obtain parts
without having to go inside the
administrative area of the building. This area of the building is heated and air conditioned with interior
finishes similar to those used in the Administration Building.
The work area of the building includes six maintenance bays, each approximately 12 feet wide by 65 feet
long, a mezzanine storage area with mechanical lift, and dispensers for oil and grease, hydraulic fluid,
etc. Two of the maintenance bays are dedicated to tractor maintenance only, three bays are configured
to allow both tractor and trailer maintenance, and one bay is dedicated to tire repair/replacement.
Equipment maintenance (excavators, mowers, etc.) can be performed in any of the five maintenance
bays. There are two 5-ton bridge cranes located in the work area, each servicing three bays. A high
capacity, forced air ventilation system is provided in the work area, with intakes located approximately
two feet above the floor on both ends of each bay to capture engine exhaust. The collected foul air is
conveyed in ducts and discharged outside the building through motorized louvers.

1.3 Innovative Aspects of the System
The design of the SWCTS integrates a number of innovative features and technological advances into
everyday transfer station operations. Among these are the following:

- A trailer drop-off area near the site entrance for commercial landscape customers.
- Above-ground scales to eliminate the need for confined space entry to clean the area under the
  scales and to perform routine maintenance.
- Elevated floors in both scale houses to allow for easy access to cables and other electronics
  below.
- On-board truck scales with scoreboards above each load-out bay on the Transfer Building tipping
  floor, and an unattended scale at the south end of the tunnel to assure that Authority transfer
  vehicles are below the legal highway weight limit when exiting the facility.
- A web-based operations monitoring system using CCTV technology that allows operational areas
  on the SWCTS site to be monitored from the Supervisor’s office in the Administration Building.
- A sacrificial wearing surface of high-strength silica fume concrete on the Transfer Building tipping
  floor, manufactured to the Authority’s specifications, that maximizes impact and abrasion
  resistance while reducing the down time and cost associated with floor replacement.
A high pressure misting system on both the tipping floor and tunnel levels of the Transfer Building for dust control.

Designated areas in the central yard for management of hot loads and turn around of roll-offs.

A concave floor design in the material handling and storage areas of the HHW Building that eliminates the need for sumps, pumps and pipes to collect spills or leaks. Any such material is contained on the floor and cleaned up by trained Authority personnel.

Fork-lift accessible mezzanine storage areas in the HHW Building and Satellite Maintenance Buildings to maximize the storage area available within the building footprints.

State-of-the-art fire suppression systems in both the Transfer and HHW Buildings.

### 1.4 What Makes this System Different from the Rest

Although the SWCTS is a state-of-the-art solid waste transfer station, designed for efficient and safe operation, it is the campus-like atmosphere and the multi-purpose function of the facility that makes it different from any of the Authority’s other transfer stations and most other transfer stations around the country. In addition to the primary solid waste and recyclables transfer operation, which saves customers in the area approximately $1 million per year in franchise collection fees, the SWCTS facility supports the Authority’s System as a whole by providing HHW processing and storage and vehicle and equipment maintenance services that would otherwise need to be performed at the North County complex. This reduces the travel time involved and results in additional cost savings to the Authority and its customers.

Beyond the technical and economic considerations, the SWCTS was designed to fit in with the community in which it is located. The east side of SR-7 in the vicinity of the SWCTS is predominated by agricultural fields (i.e. row crops) and tree farms. The west side of SR-7 in the vicinity of the SWCTS is predominated by industrial facilities, most of which are associated with agricultural operations. Structures on the site were designed architecturally to blend in with the existing industrial facilities in the vicinity of the site so that the SWCTS would not have the appearance of a solid waste facility to passers by on SR-7. In fact, when the landscaping along the SR-7 right-of-way has fully grown in, it is likely that site operations will not be noticeable at all from SR-7 except at the entrance road into the facility.

### 2. Environmental Controls and Regulatory Compliance

#### 2.1 Environmental Protection

The SWCTS was designed to protect the sensitive South Florida environment and to comply with all applicable Federal, state and local environmental regulations. When acquired by the Authority, the 40-acre SWCTS site was being actively cultivated by a privately owned agricultural operation that leased the property from Palm Beach County. As a result, the entire tract, with the exception of approximately 0.6 acres, had been previously cleared of native vegetation. That 0.6-acre area was inspected and was determined to be low-quality jurisdictional wetlands as a result of the vegetative species identified there. Since this area was in the interior of the property and would have conflicted with site operations, the Authority chose to remove the vegetation and mitigate the wetland impact by purchasing an equivalent area of wetlands in a mitigation bank approved by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) for that purpose.

Compared to the agricultural operation that preceded it, construction of the SWCTS may have actually increased the level of environmental protection achieved on the site. While the agricultural operation had a permit to withdraw and discharge irrigation water from a canal on the south side of the property, the permit conditions were quantity based and did not consider water quality. The transfer station
operation has permits which require any contaminated runoff from waste transfer operations to be collected as leachate and conveyed to the Palm Beach County wastewater collection system. Any leaks or spills occurring in the HHW and Satellite Equipment Maintenance Buildings are contained on the floors of those buildings and cleaned up by on–site personnel before any uncontrolled release to the environment can occur. Additionally, the on-site storm water management system is designed to retain and treat runoff from the 24-hour, 100-year storm event so that water quality impacts to receiving waters from non-point source pollutants are minimized.

Land uses on the south, north and east sides of the SWCTS site are all agricultural in nature. The closest development consists of industrial facilities on the west side of SR-7. Since waste transfer operations are set back over 1000 feet from SR-7, there is little chance for any off-site noise or odor related impacts. As stated previously, the architectural design of structures and landscaping of the site were performed to blend in with the surrounding community, thereby minimizing visual impacts.

Authority transfer vehicles leaving the SWCTS site are tarped to prevent material blowing out of the trailers in transit. However, litter along roads leading to solid waste transfer stations is often a problem due to material blowing out of collection vehicles delivering waste to the facilities. The SWCTS is no exception in this regard. To make sure that litter does not result in a negative perception of SWCTS operations, Authority staff collect litter along SR-7 twice per week between Atlantic Boulevard to the south and Boynton Beach Boulevard to the north, a distance of about 5 miles. This activity, which is not required by permit, is further evidence of the Authority’s commitment to environmental protection and to being a good neighbor in the community.

2.2 Impact of the Program on Human Health, Environmental Quality and Resource Conservation

The Authority’s integrated solid waste management program promotes human health, environmental quality and resource conservation in many ways including the following:

- Franchise agreements with waste haulers and interlocal agreements with municipalities to provide solid waste and recyclables collection service to residents and businesses in Palm Beach County. This greatly reduces the potential for illegal dumping of waste materials and assures that solid waste will be processed or disposed of in an environmentally responsible manner at Authority facilities.

- A state-of-the-art recycled material processing facility (RMPF) that processed 110,000 tons of fiber and co-mingled recyclable material during FY 2011, saving considerable landfill volume and conserving valuable resources.

- A comprehensive HHW program that collected, packaged and shipped 2.8 million pounds of hazardous material for further processing or proper disposal in FY 2011.

- A WTE plant that converted an average of about 3,000 tons of solid waste per day in FY 2011 into electricity in an environmentally sound manner. This reduced the quantity of solid waste requiring landfill disposal by about 90 percent.

The SWCTS is an integral part of the Authority’s System and will have a positive impact on environmental quality in Palm Beach County for years to come. For example, the SWCTS is projected to reduce the number of miles driven by solid waste collection vehicles by 2.2 million miles per year, resulting in lower air emissions and reductions in the use of diesel fuel, engine oil, tires, and other transportation related supplies. Fewer miles driven per year also results in less traffic congestion on area roads during peak periods and shorter turnaround times at Authority transfer stations, both of which contribute to additional reductions in air emissions and vehicle maintenance and supplies.
Adding the SWCTS to the Authority’s system is also expected to result in increased quantities of recyclables and HHW materials. How much of an increase is not yet known since the SWCTS has only been open since July 2011 and the South County Transfer Station has been closed for renovations for much of that time. However, when both transfer stations are open, more of the homes and businesses in the southern half of Palm Beach County will be close to a transfer station and collection of these items, particularly HHW materials, is expected to increase accordingly.

2.3 Compatibility with the Environment

The SWCTS is bordered on three sides by agriculture and on the west side by SR-7 a four lane, divided highway. The west side of SR-7 is predominated by industrial facilities, many associated with agricultural operations. A primary objective of the SWCTS site layout and architectural design was to minimize visual impacts to passers by on SR-7 by blending in with style and color schemes of the industrial facilities in the immediate area and to provide berms and landscaping along the SR-7 right-of-way that provides a visual buffer between the road and operations on the site.

The on-site storm water management system is designed to collect and treat runoff from the 24-hour, 100-year design storm prior to infiltration into the groundwater. Incremental runoff from larger storms is discharged to the E-1 Canal which runs along the west side of the site between the Authority’s property boundary and the SR-7 right-of-way. The storm water detention area in the center of the site, excavated to provide fill for construction of the transfer station, was designed with littoral zone plantings around its perimeter to assist in removing contaminants in the runoff. The detention pond is also aerated and provides new aquatic habitat for birds and other wildlife.

2.4 Environmental Compliance

Numerous environmental permits were required prior to beginning construction of the SWCTS project. These included the following:

- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
  - Solid waste processing facility construction permit
  - Environmental resource permits for storm water management and wetlands mitigation
- Florida Department of Transportation
  - Irrigation and landscaping permits for improvements within the SR-7 right-of-way.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
  - Dredge and fill permit for construction of the bridge over the E-1 canal at the site entrance.
- Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management
  - Stormwater management permit
- Palm Beach County Water Utilities Department
  - Construction permits for off-site and on-site water line and wastewater force main improvements, including fire protection.
- Palm Beach County Health Department
  - Permits for temporary water supply during construction and for construction of on-site gravity sanitary sewers and laterals.
- Lake Worth Drainage District
Stormwater discharge permit and permit for construction of bridge over E-1 canal at site entrance.

In addition to these permits, there were a number of other permits required from the Palm Beach County Planning, Zoning and Building Departments that had environmental components to them, such as architectural design and landscaping requirements that were conditions of the Building Permit for the project.

All permit conditions were complied with during construction and all of the permits have either been closed out or converted to operational status by the agency involved. There have been no Notices of Violations of any permit conditions since the SWCTS opened in July 2011.

2.5 Awards, Letters or Facility Inspection Data

Following construction, the SWCTS was inspected by all applicable regulatory agencies, including the FDEP, and was approved to begin operations in July 2011. To date, the facility has not received any awards or letters of commendation. Nevertheless, the SWCTS is performing as intended and making a positive contribution to the operation of the Authority’s System.

2.6 Compatibility of the System with Other Local Solid Waste Management Systems

The Authority has agreements in place with franchise haulers who collect waste in unincorporated Palm Beach County to accept waste at any of the Authority’s facilities. The Authority also has interlocal agreements in place with local municipalities in Palm Beach County to accept their waste for an agreed upon fee. The Authority makes every attempt to accommodate the needs of their customers at its facilities. The Authority also has agreements with privately owned and operated mulching facilities in Palm Beach County that can be used by local contractors and landscapers. The Authority issues permits to these facilities and monitors their operations to ensure that compliance with permit conditions are being met.

Facilities at the SWCTS are fully integrated with the remainder of the Authority’s System. The primary objective of the Authority’s solid waste transfer operation is to keep the WTE plant running at or above capacity at all times. Transfer station supervisors communicate with the WTE plant each morning and are directed as to how many tons of waste they should deliver to the plant that day. On some days, waste from the SWCTS is all sent to the WTE plant. On other days, the some or all of the waste may be directed to the Authority’s landfills. All recyclables from the SWCTS are delivered to the Authority’s RMPF at the North County Complex.

HHW operations staff at the SWCTS are responsible for collecting materials from drop-off centers at the South County Transfer Station and the Glades Transfer Station in Belle Glade, FL as well as those delivered directly to the SWCTS. Operations staff at the North County HHW facility collect materials from drop-off centers at the Central County, West Central County and North County Transfer Stations. The HHW material collected at the SWCTS is processed, stored temporarily, packaged and ultimately shipped off-site for recycling or disposal, as is the material collected at the North County HHW facility. Additionally, the Authority has a cooperative agreement with the Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Department to process and dispose of unused pharmaceuticals. Since these materials are regulated substances, they must be collected and stored by law enforcement personnel. The Sheriff’s Department delivers the materials to the North County HHW Facility for processing and disposal in the Authority’s WTE plant.

Maintenance operations at the SWCTS are coordinated with similar operations at the Authority’s North County maintenance facility. Tractors, trailers and heavy equipment assigned to the SWCTS and South
County Transfer Station will typically receive maintenance and repair service at the SWCTS. However, if the North County facility is overloaded, maintenance of other vehicles and equipment can also be performed at the SWCTS. The SWCTS is fully equipped to perform maintenance on any vehicle or piece of heavy equipment the Authority operates.

3. Program Planning

3.1 Description of Facility Planning Process

Planning for the SWCTS project began in the early 2000s when it was recognized by the Authority that growth in the southwestern section of Palm Beach County would soon overload the South County Transfer Station which could not be expanded due to site limitations. The planning process began by holding meetings with elected officials, community leaders and neighborhood groups to explain that the SWCTS was needed and that the collection fees charged by franchise haulers could be expected to increase if they had lengthy turnaround times at the South County Transfer Station or had to transport waste and recyclables longer distances to other existing Authority facilities.

While this interactive dialogue with the local community was proceeding, the Authority began looking for tracts of land in the southwest section of Palm Beach County that could support a transfer station of the size required. Site characteristics initially desired by the Authority included the following:

- A willing seller;
- A site with at least 40 acres of usable area for transfer station operations;
- Proximity to major roads; and
- Affordable cost.

The Authority identified and evaluated several sites that, at least on paper, met their initial criteria. However, after evaluation, all of these sites were considered to be marginal at best. At this point, discussions began with Palm Beach County regarding County-owned property in the area that was being leased to farmers for agricultural purposes. The 40-acre tract, which is now the SWCTS site, was identified as the preferred location for the new transfer station. However, the property was part of a larger land holding, known as the Agricultural Reserve, that the County had purchased years ago with environmental bond funds. Property in the Agricultural Reserve is subject to strict limitations on development. For the preferred site to be sold to the Authority for use as a transfer station, the Board of county Commissioners had to approve it and the County’s Comprehensive Plan had to be amended to allow it, a process that required review and approval by the Florida Department of Community Affairs and over a year to complete.

In the end, however, all necessary approvals were eventually obtained. The County and the Authority negotiated a sale agreement for the property and the lease holder of the property agreed to compensation for lost revenue due to early termination of the lease. The Authority also agreed to provide the lease holder with access to his remaining agricultural operation from the Authority’s bridge over the E-1 Canal and not to impact the lease holder’s permits for withdrawal of irrigation water and discharge of storm water runoff to adjacent canals.
Once the Authority had gained title to the property, the project proceeded through the normal Palm Beach County Site Plan Approval Process, which in this case, also required a zoning change to allow a Public Use zoning classification in an agricultural area. This process involves preparation of a detailed Site Plan showing road layout, building footprints, architectural renderings, landscaping plan, traffic plan, proposed water and sewer improvements, storm water management plan, and any other considerations (e.g., wetlands mitigation) that may be specific to the individual site. After several sets of review comments and modifications to the proposed site layout and design, Site Plan Approval was obtained from Palm Beach County.

Following Site Plan Approval, permitting and design of the SWCTS facility proceeded. As noted above, permits were required from various federal, state and local regulatory agencies. In addition, building permits were required. Separate building permits were required for each of the four structures on the site. To save time, the Authority submitted a draft set of design documents for preliminary review by the Palm Beach County Building Official prior to bidding of the project. This allowed the design team to address most of the Building Official’s comments and concerns prior to the selected General Contractor formally applying for the building permit and saved a month or more of time following contract award.

### 3.2 Effectiveness of Facility Planning Process

The SWTS project was politically very sensitive, and although the planning process took a number of years to complete, it was extremely effective in that the benefits of the project and the siting of the SWCTS facility itself were thoroughly vetted by all of the various parties involved. Without the diligence of Authority managers and staff, working with elected officials, other County agencies and neighborhood groups throughout the planning process, it is possible that the SWCTS may never have moved forward.

Once the permitting and design process began, the design team met with on numerous occasions with Authority staff to fully understand the Authority’s objectives and needs for the facilities to be constructed. Workshop sessions were held with Authority operations staff to lay out the size, configuration and floor plans for each of the buildings and operational areas on the site. This resulted in the Authority being fully invested in the basis of design for the facilities and getting exactly what was needed operationally from the completed project.

### 3.3 System Downtime

The SWCTS began operation in July 2011 and, to date, has not experienced any downtime. All facilities have operated as intended and designed.

### 4. Performance, Economics and Cost-Effectiveness

The Authority’s transfer stations play an integral role in providing for an efficient and cost-effective solid waste management system in Palm Beach County. During FY 2011, the Authority transferred in excess of 1.2 million tons through its network of six transfer stations. In aggregate, Authority transfer vehicles hauled approximately 55,000 loads a total of about 2.3 million miles. On average, Authority transfer stations receive about 5 incoming deliveries for every outgoing load.

The transfer stations play a key role in reducing fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. They also help reduce traffic, wear and tear on roads, and the overall cost of collection to customers, while increasing System efficiency. The Authority is committed to managing an ever increasing supply of waste in a cost-effective and environmentally sound manner.
4.1 Efficiency of Operation

Since the SWCTS was opened in July 2012, transfer operations at the facility have been a model of efficiency. Turnaround times for collection vehicles delivering waste to the facility have typically been less than 15 minutes and rarely has the queuing line at the entrance to the Transfer Building exceeded five vehicles. This is a marked improvement over previous conditions at the South County Transfer Station, which is currently out of service and undergoing a major renovation. When the South County Transfer Station reopens later this year, the tonnage received at the SWCTS will be reduced to some degree. However, the SWCTS has been designed to accommodate substantial growth in the southwestern portion of Palm Beach County and will continue to provide efficient waste transfer operations for years to come.

4.2 Operational Performance

During the first six months of FY 2012 (October 2011 thorough March 2012), the SWCTS received 82,000 tons of Class I solid waste, 16,000 tons of vegetative waste and 12,000 tons of source separated recyclables. During that period, a total of 5,200 loads of material were transported in transfer vehicles from the SWCTS to processing and disposal facilities at the Authority’s North County Complex. The average net weight of material transported per load was approximately 21.7 tons. The average gross vehicle weight leaving the SWCTS was about 79,500 pounds. This is close to the maximum allowable without exceeding legal highway weight limits and is another indication of the operational efficiency that is achieved by SWCTS operations staff.

4.3 How does the Organization Foster Customer Service?

The Authority’s System is designed and managed to maximize service to its customers. The Authority’s website provides customers with general information about the Authority’s System and an overview of the services provided. Specific information is also provided on the location and operating hours for each facility within the System and the materials that are accepted at each location. A customer service phone line is provided to answer any questions that customers may have.

The Authority has established franchise collection areas and contracts with private waste management firms to provide for effective and reliable collection of solid waste and recyclables from its residential customers. The Authority’s transfer stations, strategically located throughout Palm Beach County serve to reduce the fees charged by the franchise haulers for providing the collection services. For example, construction of the SWCTS saved residential customers in the SWCTS service area approximately $1 million per year in franchise collection fees compared to what they would have paid if the SWCTS was not in operation and the franchise haulers had to deliver waste material to other Authority facilities further away.

The transfer stations also provide safe and convenient facilities for customers to deliver HHW materials. In FY 2011, the Authority collected approximately 2.8 million pounds of HHW materials and expects to collect additional HHW material in future years with the SWCTS facility coming on line.
In addition to the transfer stations, the Authority licenses a number of private mulching operations around Palm Beach County to receive vegetative waste from Authority customers in an attempt to make it easier, more convenient and less expensive for customers to deliver waste materials to properly operated waste management facilities. During FY 2011, approximately 200,000 tons of vegetative waste were received and processed by such facilities licensed by the Authority to operate in Palm Beach County.

4.4 Does the Facility Operate within its Budget?

The operating budget for the SWCTS for FY 2012 is approximately $700,000. Through the first 6 months of the fiscal year (October – March), operating expenses at the SWCTS have been generally consistent with this budget projection. It is expected that the SWCTS will operate within its budget for FY 2012, its first full year of operation.

4.5 Are the Economics Typical of Those Found in the Industry?

Over the first 6 months of FY 2012, the SWCTS received 110,000 tons of solid waste and recyclables for transport to the WTE plant, landfills, mulching facility and RMPF at the Authority’s North County Complex. The Authority anticipates a material handling cost of about $4.50 per ton and a transportation cost of about $10.00 per ton at this facility during FY 2012. These unit costs are comparable to the five other transfer stations in the Authority’s System as well as other transfer stations of comparable size and function elsewhere in the U.S. As the Authority’s System grows and more waste and recyclable material is delivered to the SWCTS facility, the unit cost of material handling will be reduced somewhat.

4.6 Was the Facility Designed and Operated as Budgeted and Expected?

The SWCTS complex, including both on-site and off-site improvements (utility extensions, entrance bridge, power supply, etc.) was constructed for approximately $30 million, which was somewhat less than the Authority originally had budgeted for the project. The project benefitted in this regard by a highly competitive environment in the construction industry during 2008 and early 2009 when the project was advertised for bid.

As noted above, the SWCTS operated as budgeted during the first 6 months of FY 2012. Tonnage and revenue figures for the first 6 months of FY 2012 were also comparable to projections made during the FY 2012 budgeting process.

5. Utilization of Equipment /Systems and Technologies

5.1 Types of Equipment Utilized

Vehicles and equipment assigned to the SWCTS for transfer operations include the following:

- Ten (10) over-the-road tractors
Ten (10) 100-yd³ (48-foot) aluminum trailers with walking floors and tarping systems
Two (2) rubber tire excavators with clamshell attachment for spreading and compacting waste and recyclables in the trailers
Two (2) solid tire front-end loaders for stacking waste on the tipping floor and loading waste and into transfer trailers through the load-out hoppers in the floor.
One (1) articulated sweeper for clean-up

Other equipment, such as lift trucks, pressure washers, etc. is shared between transfer stations on an as-needed basis. Presently, none of this equipment is permanently assigned to the SWCTS.

Vehicles and equipment assigned to the SWCTS for HHW operations include the following:
One (1) fork-lift truck
One (1) box truck for servicing the collection centers at the Central County, South County and Belle Glade Transfer Stations

In addition, a roll-off truck and miscellaneous support equipment is shared with HHW operations at the Authority’s North County Complex.

The Maintenance Building at the SWCTS is equipped with the full complement of equipment and tools that would be expected to be found in a full-service maintenance facility. This includes hydraulic lifts in five of the six service bays and two (2) 5-ton bridge cranes, one on each half of the building.

5.2 Efficiency and Effectiveness of Equipment

All of the equipment used at the SWCTS is specified by operations personnel to meet the specific needs of the Authority. In some cases, the equipment is custom ordered for this purpose. For example, the rubber tire excavators used on the Transfer Building tipping floor are specified with vertically extended cabs so that the excavator operator sits higher and can see down into the transfer trailers without having to stand up in the cab to do so. This significantly reduces the potential for accidents and injuries and increases the efficiency of the work being performed.

The Authority monitors the effectiveness and efficiency of operations at all of its transfer stations on an ongoing basis. The effectiveness of transfer station operations is indicated by regulatory compliance, cleanliness of the site and surrounding area, and documentation of customer complaints or complaints from adjacent property owners. Metrics used by the Authority to monitor transfer station performance include the following:

- Loads per tractor per pay period
- Hours per tractor per pay period
- Average gross weight per load
- Average net weight per load
- Man-hours per ton
- Man-hours per load
- Tons per man-hour
- Overtime utilization

To date, the SWCTS has been in compliance with all regulatory requirements and has demonstrated a level of efficiency similar to the Authority’s other transfer stations.

6. Worker Health and Safety

6.1 Employee Training Frequency and Safety Procedures

The Authority provides a qualified and experienced work force to operate the SWCTS in accordance with FDEP permit conditions and other local, state and federal regulations. A staff of 21 is assigned to the SWCTS transfer operation, including one Supervisor, one Assistant Supervisor, one Field Clerk, eight
Equipment Operators and ten Truck Drivers. There are five FDEP-certified Transfer Station Operators assigned to the SWCTS, including the Supervisor and Assistant Supervisor and three of the Equipment Operators. FDEP certification renewal for these individuals is required every 3 years. At least one certified Transfer Station Operator is on duty whenever the SWCTS is open. All of the Equipment Operators assigned to the facility are certified Spotters with FDEP-approved training and certification renewal required every 3 years. The Authority’s Truck Drivers all have Florida commercial drivers licenses (CDLs) with physicals required every 2 years and license renewals required every 6 years by FDOT. The Authority also operates a random drug testing program of all employees.

The HHW operation at the SWCTS includes four full-time staff, including one Supervisor and three operations staff. All four of these individuals have had OSHA 40-hour HAZWOPER training and FDOT HAZMAT training. Continuing education is required annually for OSHA certification. Continuing education is required every 3 years for FDOT certification.

There are a number of safety measures built into the design of the SWCTS. For example, the entrance to the tipping floor on the upper level of the Transfer Building has a flipper gate which prevents delivery vehicles from entering the building until a spotter or equipment operator determines there is room for them to unload without being impacted by traffic already on the floor. A roll-off turnaround area is provided on the west side of the Vegetative Waste Load-Out Area (see Figure 2) to avoid these trucks having to perform this activity on the tipping floor. This area also has water service available and doubles as a hot-load area where waste can be wetted down, if needed to prevent fires from occurring on the tipping floor. Both the HHW and Maintenance Buildings are equipped with exhaust fans designed to assure a safe working environment for Authority staff at all times.

Additionally, the Authority maintains a comprehensive Safety Program for all of its facilities which outlines procedures to be followed for preventing accidents and injuries and measures to be taken should they occur. The Authority’s Risk Management Department conducts monthly safety meetings at each of the Authority’s facilities during which a video of a highlighted safety topic is shown and the topic is discussed with staff as it relates to the specific facility involved.

6.2 Injury Rates

Since the SWCTS opened in July 2011, there have been no reportable injuries at the facility.

7. Public Acceptance, Appearance and Aesthetics

7.1 Appearance of Vehicles, Maintenance Facility and Yard

The Authority takes pride in the appearance of its facilities, vehicles and equipment. Transfer vehicles are all clearly marked with the Authority’s logo and maintained for safe and efficient operation. There is a dedicated truck wash at the Authority’s North County complex where trucks are cleaned daily to maintain a proper appearance. Tractors and trailers are also replaced on a regular schedule to keep the Authority’s fleet of vehicles updated and equipped with the latest technological advances for increased performance and efficiency.

As discussed previously in Section 1, the Maintenance Building at the SWCTS is a state-of-the-art maintenance facility with full service capability to work on any of the Authority’s vehicles and heavy equipment. The Maintenance Building has the same architectural features as other structures on the SWCTS site and is kept in good condition by the Authority staff who work there.

The interior yard area of the SWCTS has the feel of a campus setting with the large storm water retention pond in the center and the various operational areas and structures located around the outside of the
site. The interior of the site is kept free of litter and grassed areas are mowed on a regular basis to maintain a neat appearance. The tipping floor and tunnel area of the Transfer Building is cleaned off every night to prevent odors from developing and migrating off-site during the overnight hours.

7.2 Are Vehicles Properly Maintained for Cleanliness?

As indicated above, the Authority takes pride in the appearance of its vehicles, particularly the transfer vehicles that carry the Authority logo and are most visible on the highway and in the communities they serve. All of the Authority’s transfer vehicles are cleaned daily at the truck wash facility at the North County Maintenance Facility. Truck engines are also maintained for proper fuel efficiency and emission levels, which also promotes clean vehicle appearance.

7.3 Public Relations and Public Education

The planning process for the SWCTS included extensive community involvement as described previously in Section 3.1.

The SWA has an ongoing public education program on its website at www.swa.org. This website provides extensive information regarding the Authority’s System (e.g. location and operating hours of facilities, including the SWCTS). Additionally, the web site provides educational information on various topics including renewable energy, greenhouse gas reduction, recycling and household hazardous waste. Tours of Authority facilities are provided on a regularly scheduled basis and a Visitor Center is located at the Authority’s WTE Plant for larger group functions.

7.4 Is the Facility a Good Neighbor?

The SWCTS was designed to be a good neighbor. To blend in with the existing community the site plan included architectural features that are similar to the industrial facilities in the area. Berms and landscaping along SR-7 were also integrated into the site plan to minimize visual impacts from the highway. Primary waste transfer operations are enclosed in the Transfer Building and set back as far as possible on the site to minimize any noise impacts to development on the west side of SR-7. There has been no evidence of any traffic congestion on SR-7 as a result of SWCTS operation.

To address any community concerns regarding litter, the Authority adopted the 5-mile section of SR-7 between Atlantic Boulevard on the south and Boynton Beach Boulevard on the north in the FDOT’s Adopt-a-Highway Program. Although required to do so only once per month, Authority staff collect litter along this 5-mile section of SR-7 twice per week to ensure that litter from collection vehicles delivering waste to the SWCTS does not have any adverse impact on the surrounding community. Since this activity was begun, there have been no complaints regarding litter along SR-7. Furthermore, there have not been any complaints regarding any other aspect of the Authority’s on-site operations since the SWCTS opened in July 2011.