



## 2020 Summary of Activities:

In the spring of 2019, legislative bodies of seven municipalities passed resolutions to formally enter the Washtenaw Regional Resource Management Authority (WRRMA) by adopting Articles of Incorporation. These municipalities are the townships of Ann Arbor, Pittsfield, Scio, Ypsilanti, and the cities of Dexter, Saline, and Ypsilanti, representing a population of over 150,000 residents. WRRMA was officially formed on September 23, 2019 and the Office of the Great Seal under the Michigan Secretary of State accepted the required documentation.

After establishment, WRRMA commenced with organizational processes. In early 2020, the WRRMA Board elected officers including Ron Akers from the City of Ypsilanti as Chair, Jeff Fordice of the City of Saline as Vice Chair, and Della DiPietro of Ann Arbor Charter Township as Secretary and Treasurer. Delegates provided their township or city with a request to assign a both delegate and alternate member from each municipality for 2020. The Board passed bylaws and approved a contract with Washtenaw County to provide administrative, education and outreach, and other support services during 2020 and 2021. The Washtenaw County Board of Public Works has committed to matching each member's \$5,000 contribution in 2020 and 2021 which will offset the costs of the contract. The WRRMA Board also elected to enter into a contract with attorney Robert Davis, who also represents Southeastern Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority.

The WRRMA Board decided to preliminarily focus on education and outreach, with the aim of increasing the quantity of high-quality recycled materials within their borders. WRRMA agreed upon a commonly accepted recyclables list, including the slight differences as a result of communities sending materials to different MRFs (Material Recovery Facilities), and distributed it to member communities for use. Furthermore, WRRMA agreed on an official logo, launched a website ([wrrma.org](http://wrrma.org)), and put out a press release about its formation and grant award.

In the spring of 2021, WRRMA was awarded an EGLE and The Recycling Partnership "Recycling Quality Improvement" grant with a value up to \$243,605, including a cash value of \$118,605. Additionally, WRRMA applied for and received a \$7,500 Waste Reduction Sponsorships match provided by the Washtenaw County Division of Solid Waste. The grant targets contamination to increase the value of the recycling stream. Pre- and post-program metrics are calculated to determine the increased value of the recycled materials. The program provides educational information to residents through mailers, digital marketing, and access to an app that enables residents to search for whether materials are recyclable. A "Feet on the Street" curbside tagging component provides immediate and individualized feedback to residents on how they can recycle better. If residents repeatedly put trash in the recycle bin during the program, the bins are not collected. In other municipalities nationwide, the program

has achieved a 20-40% decrease in recycling contamination. The pandemic has delayed the anticipated start date to spring 2021.

In July, WRRMA passed a resolution to consider and acknowledge the particular needs and requirements of each member community in negotiating and securing contracts. These requirements include items such as operation times, labor terms, routes, or other stated member issues. The resolution affirms concerns brought forth from stakeholders before WRRMA was established, specifically related to labor relations, recycling and trash service levels and requirements. One current member and one potential member have unionized labor; one of goals of the resolution is to affirm those terms set by members.

Currently, WRRMA is laying the groundwork to evaluate if members could improve service delivery or reduce costs by regionally contracting for services such as recycling processing. WRRMA is gathering metrics on contracted trash and recycling tonnage from member communities. Recycle Ann Arbor presented and discussed the Ann Arbor MRF estimated to be complete in mid- to late-2021 at the September 2020 meeting. WRRMA has toured the Southeastern Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority (SOCRRA) MRF in to view how another regional authority handles their recycling stream and anticipates touring the GFL MRF in New Boston when it is safe to do so.