

4 *Conclusion*

Pinellas County has experienced continuous growth within recent years due to its location and the fact that Florida is one of the fastest growing states in the nation. Like many other expanding communities in the United States, Pinellas County is faced with the problem of developing a coordinated management strategy for increasing quantities of solid waste. Pinellas County is a leader in resource recovery and will continue to be pro-active in addressing its solid waste needs. This element will help ensure that adequate planning continues. Solid waste legislation was a priority of the 1988 legislature and an extensive solid waste law, including a 30 percent recycling goal, was passed (Chapter 88-130). Even though the list of recyclable materials to meet the 30 percent recycling goal can, and has changed from time to time causing changes or modifications in recycling for local governments, recycling will continue to play an important part in the management of solid waste.

The County and its 24 municipalities have a long history of solid waste planning going back over two decades. The first step in a consolidated effort to solve its solid waste problem was the passage of locally prepared and sponsored state legislation (Chapter 75-487, as amended), "The Pinellas County Solid Waste Disposal and Resource Recovery Act." This act, and subsequent interlocal agreements, placed the sole responsibility for solid waste disposal and resource recovery with the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners. Pursuant to the mandates of the act, the County initiated a resource recovery program.

Following lengthy discussions and the completion of detailed engineering feasibility studies, the County decided in 1975 to proceed with implementation of a countywide resource recovery system. In 1980, the County issued \$160 million in tax-exempt revenue bonds to pay for the construction of the County's waste-to-energy plant which began commercial operations in May 1983. A third boiler was added in 1986 which had been anticipated in the original design.

The countywide generation rate steadily increased from 1983 to a high of 1.36 tons per capita per year in 1987. This increase was probably due to the closure of several landfills within the county and the resultant shift of all the solid waste to the waste-to-energy plant. Other factors affecting the increase may include stricter enforcement of the flow control ordinance and waste from Tampa and Hillsborough County may have been taken to the Pinellas facility because of lower tipping fees. Therefore, it appears that these high annual percent increases are anomalies and that the growth in the per capital generation rate has stabilized. For these reasons, and based on both the capacity at the waste-to-energy plant and the landfill, the level of service standard for solid waste disposal was then set at this period high of 1.30 tons per capita per year. Any expected annual increase in the generation rate since 1987 would have been offset by an increase in recycling.

By taking the average of the generation rates for 2000 through 2005 (see Table 8), and with evidence that this rate will remain stable in future years, it is projected that the generation rate through 2020 will be 1.06 tons per capita per year. Thus the projected future level of service

for solid waste disposal through 2020 will be 1.06 tons per capita per year. This rate is well below the adopted level of service standard of 1.3 tons per capita per year.

Between the years 2005 and 2020 the amount of solid waste to be disposed in Pinellas County is expected to increase by 6.34 percent. This equates to 1,209,263 tons in 2015. The Bridgeway Acres landfill, the only permitted Class I sanitary landfill in Pinellas County is expected to have a useful life of 30 years at these projected levels.

Pinellas County has planned for its growth and has kept ahead of the solid waste crisis that is troubling so many other communities. This element will be instrumental in implementing further solid waste system improvements so a crisis does not develop. Continuing to work with other local governments and state agencies in solid waste planning will ensure that Pinellas County provides for the needs of its citizens well into the next century.