SERVICE CAN MEET A NEED
AND IT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE
Letter to Our Stakeholders

Making a difference for our customers, for our City and for each other was the goal for all of the Solid Waste Management employees in FY 2018. We started the year by collectively writing our new mission statement and ended the year helping nearly 15,000 customers lower their fees without lowering their level of service. I would like to highlight some stories that have made this a year like none other.

Mission 2.0

Strong organizations have strong mission statements and when we re-evaluated ours this past year, it was clearly not reflective of who we are or what we do.

We engaged all employees to help create a new defining identity for the Department. We asked everyone to complete this sentence: “If I was writing our mission, I would definitely include this word: ______.” The response was overwhelming and all the suggested words were very powerful. Taking all the sincere input and distilling it down into just a few words was challenging but the end result was outstanding.

This employee participation has evoked ownership and has made the mission statement part of our culture. All SWMD employees carry their mission statement cards as routinely as any other form of ID.

Solutions for Businesses

I am also proud to report that we launched a commercial recycling initiative, ReWorksSA, in February as an effective way to help local businesses implement better recycling practices in the workplace. While the SWMD does not generally collect commercial accounts, we remain committed to supporting all of San Antonio’s recycling efforts. ReWorkSA is another major step toward sustainability for our City.

In less than a year, ReWorksSA has established relationships with major organizations in San Antonio. H-E-B, Pearl, San Antonio Colleges, Toyota Manufacturing, Harland Clark and many others are certified members in the program and we thank them for their support.

Equity in Customer Choices

Because our customers rely on our services differently according to their needs, we strategized how to deliver options that better suit each individual. One example is our cart downsizing program. Customers have a choice of brown trash cart size based on the volume of trash they generate and also how well they utilize the recycling and organics programs.

The three cart sizes - small, medium and large - are priced differently. The smaller the cart the smaller the monthly collection fee (while
still keeping the large green and blue carts). Much like utility pricing, customers only pay for what they use. The savings of using a smaller brown cart is an incentive to reduce tonnage to the landfill and keep San Antonio on a path toward greater sustainability.

Key Metrics Improving

The Department’s traditional recycling goal for FY 2018 was 38%. We did not achieve that goal. However, our Residential Recycling Performance Rate was just under 36%. More information on this can be found on page 30. There are some positive trends to report for the year. For the last several years contamination rates have been improving. Over a year ago, blue recycling carts on average had 26% contamination. In FY 2018, that rate was down to 20.6%. Green organics cart contamination also went down significantly from a 43% rejection rate to 22%. In addition, customers are sending less to the landfill. In 2008, an average of 1.4 tons of trash was generated per residence. That has dropped to just a little over 1 ton. Our organics program diverted an additional 45,000 tons from the landfill. The statistic I am most proud of is we reduced our preventable accidents from last year by almost 50%.

Proactive Approach to Talent

We, along with other City Departments, are competing on a national level for Commercial Driver License (CDL) drivers and heavy machinery mechanics. In collaboration with the City’s Human Resources Department, we launched an apprenticeship program. Individuals apply and if selected are hired as temporary employees. During this paid employment, they receive hands-on training toward passing the CDL examination. We had two candidates successfully complete the program, earn their CDL licenses and were hired as permanent employees by the City of San Antonio. We are growing our own talent internally and organically.

Planning for the Future

Our management team gathered for a strategic retreat in April and determined that over the coming years, five areas of focus should be our priority. We are developing a forward-looking plan to prepare for San Antonio’s growth in the areas of customer engagement, human capital, technology, fixed assets and overall growth, resources and sustainability. In next year’s annual report, I will share our progress with you.

I want to give a very special thanks to all of my Solid Waste Management Department co-workers for their dedication and hard work this past year. And to our customers, we will continue our efforts to deliver excellent customer service and offer programs that are beneficial and valuable.

We sincerely believe that service should not just meet a need – it should make a difference.

Best regards,

David W. McCary, CPM
Director
City of San Antonio
Solid Waste Management Department
DIVISIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Administration
Brush & Bulky
Commercial Recycling
Customer Service
Education & Outreach
Environmental Services
Fleet Operations
Garbage Collection
Inspections
Marketing & Communications
Organics
Planning & Innovation
Residential Recycling
Safety
The Administration Division of the SWMD has multiple units. Customer Account Management, Compliance, Fleet Acquisition, Warehouse Operations, Event Services, Fiscal and Procurement all performed a variety of customer account stewardship services and financial governance measures in FY 2018.

For the year, the Department provided approximately 355,000 households with curbside collection and other services. All residents that pay the Department’s Environmental Fee on their CPS Energy bill are entitled to use the drop-off facilities. There are approximately 596,000 Environmental Fee customers. Combined, this is approximately a 2% increase over the prior year.

The SWMD partners with CPS Energy for billing. The Administration Division implemented an improved process for new customer service activation. Historically, CPS Energy would create a SWMD account for an address when a utility service, not solid waste collection service, request was processed. This was switched to the SWMD informing CPS Energy when a residence is receiving collection service. This ensured more accurate start dates for collection billing. Account billing changes can range between 5,000 and 7,000 per month.

This division was also responsible for issuing and collecting violation fees for cart contamination. A new program launched in FY 2018 was a fee waiver option for residents who requested an opportunity to avoid paying the $25 assessed amount, for repeatedly contaminated carts, or $50 specifically for diaper contamination. This online activity directed residents to a specific website where they studied the SWMD’s recycling and organics information and answered several questions. Fees were not assessed to customers who successfully completed this activity.

The Department provided recycling opportunities at several special events including New Year’s Eve, Final Four and Fiesta. Recycling activities increased by 4.33 tons in FY 2018 over FY 2017 at the two highly-attended Fiesta parades.
This division provided multiple collection services to the SWMD’s customers but the curbside collection of brush and bulky items, at no charge, was perhaps the most valuable service to City residents. The team consisted of 148 full-time employees and 30 temporary employees.

Both curbside brush collection and curbside bulky collection were scheduled twice per year. Customers were notified with tags placed on their front doors. This division delivered approximately 1.4 million tags this past year. Total tonnage collected for FY 2018 was 32,574 tons of bulky material from 226,831 piles and 39,446 tons of brush from 186,816 piles. Brush was converted to mulch and made available to the public. Out of cycle collections, which is by request, contributed an additional 1,151 tons of material.

The SWMD offered a program known as Dial-a-Trailer (DAT). Large containers were available by request for community and neighborhood clean-up events. There were 91 DAT events this past year and 320 tons from 2,496 customer vehicles were collected.

The Brush and Bulky Division also responded to calls about illegal dumping. In FY 2018, 1,516 tons from 5,564 piles, which included 1,722 tires, were collected from locations all over the City. These piles occurred all over San Antonio, but as a pro-active measure, a special unit referred to as the Neighborhood Enhancement Team regularly checked on repeat illegal dumping sites in all quadrants of the City. There were around 80 of these frequent offense locations.

Other services included large dead animal collection, metal and tire recycling and mulch hauling. Over 60,000 tons of mulch was hauled in FY 2018. Free landfill days and Christmas tree recycling were also coordinated this past year.

After major storms, this division provides catastrophe relief, clearing roads of downed trees and other obstacles. In these extreme situations, the Department’s service does meet a need but helping neighbors re-establish a normal routine after devastation is one of the clearest examples of how service can truly make a difference.
ReWorksSA was launched in February 2018 to be an ongoing commercial recycling resource for the City’s business community. This SWMD program focused on connecting local companies with recycling solutions and recognizing those that successfully implemented effective waste reduction strategies and recycling best practices. Businesses applied to join the program and were offered consultations by City staff at no cost. These were designed to help companies achieve certification status or improve existing recycling tactics.

In FY 2018, ReWorksSA certified 36 local businesses as bronze, silver or gold and made consultations to 79 more. Additionally, 13 organizations received recycling containers at no cost from the ReWorksSA program. The program also helped to fulfill a specific goal of the City’s Recycling and Resource Recovery Plan which was to affect and improve recycling opportunities for businesses. Brand awareness was achieved through a multi-tiered strategy of traditional media, digital media, social media and successful earned media coverage. The team was also very active at networking events, including Chambers of Commerce and pursuing referrals.

A significant component in establishing the program was developing the new website, reworkssa.org. Many online tools and resources became available there. The site began to help San Antonio citizens that care about recycling find businesses with corporate social responsibility priorities in their business model.

The SWMD Commercial Recycling Division also included the Multi-Family unit. (According to City Code Section 14-43, the SWMD is responsible for enforcement and to make recycling information available to residents of multi-family structures such as apartment complexes, high-rises, townhomes and lofts.) Enforcement in this context was helping properties come into compliance. In FY 2018, the team assisted 37 properties come into compliance after failing initial inspections.
This unit ended the year with a 98% compliance rate. The team also retooled the process of scheduling inspections to increase dedication to outreach and compliance education. Like the Department’s efforts to educate its single-family resident customers, these multi-family activities were part of the overarching goal of making recycling information accessible to all the citizens of San Antonio.
The Customer Service Division used a diverse approach to engage customers in FY 2018 to keep pace with communication in the digital era. The call center handled a high volume of direct phone conversations, but the SWMD also reached individuals through social media platforms, on the Department’s mobile app, My Waste, by mailing letters directly to specific residents and even with news coverage for holiday changes to collection days.

This team of six full time customer service specialists and one supervisor handled 49,501 phone calls in FY 2018. Four in the group were fluent in Spanish. The majority of customers needing assistance spoke with 3-1-1 operators first. Since those operators were not this Department’s employees, when a situation was complex the customer was introduced to the SWMD team who were empowered to escalate or resolve matters quickly and efficiently.

At year end, there were more than 4,200 followers on the Department’s Facebook page. Comments and posts here were treated as importantly as the phone calls. Personal responses were made in real time directly to specific customers about their questions, complaints or issues. For the past several years, this has been mostly incoming messages initiated by customers. In FY 2018 the division increased the volume of Department content, pushing out relevant stories and information for the
public. Additionally, the Department had over 14,000 subscribers on My Waste.

This SWMD approach to excellent customer service was based on a case management model as opposed to a traditional call center structure. A major customer service initiative launched in FY 2018 was the customer satisfaction survey. Each week, 25 individuals recently assisted by the Customer Service Division were selected for follow up conversations about their experience and whether their needs were met. This feedback facilitated the development of strategies around improving the overall customer experience.

Also in FY 2018, as a result of a leadership retreat in April, the SWMD began to develop a forward-looking plan to address all aspects of customer engagement across the next several years. This was a proactive strategy to prepare for San Antonio’s inevitable growth, which will create an even larger customer base for the Department.

**SWMD Customer** Friday, July 13, 2018

I called City of San Antonio Solid Waste Management yesterday to request to downsize my solid waste can, since most of my household waste is recycling or compost. They arrived this morning to switch out my cart. Fantastic service response time! I’m proud that our city is doing such a great job with recycling and composting.
TEACHING NEXT GEN RECYCLERS
EDUCATION & OUTREACH
Nearly 83,000 People in FY 2018
Three Recycling Coordinators completed 1,053 presentations in FY 2018 in schools, at community and council district events and to other CoSA Departments. This surpassed the division’s goal of 895 presentations and reached an estimated 82,900 San Antonians, also above the goal of 65,000. Additionally, they promoted recycling through displays and informational material at several large City-wide events hosted by SeaWorld, local media and SPURS Entertainment which included the Rampage hockey team and the San Antonio Football Club (SAFC). The Recycling Coordinators taught in English and Spanish and tailored presentations for age ranges Pre-K to seniors.

School presentations followed the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum, which can improve teachers’ results with the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) exam. Games, activities and interactive components of the presentations also helped students retain information. A highlight of FY 2018 was the creation of a custom interactive touch-screen game that allowed students to drop and drag various items into the correct carts. The game was named Cart Smart and was featured on two 66-inch screen monitors.

During summer months, the coordinators remained busy with day camps hosted by the City’s Parks and Recreation Department along with other community events. In FY 2018, there were 97 (counted in the above grand total) summer camp presentations to an estimated 11,200 children.

The Outreach Division also used their robotic mascot named Curby. Curby had one operator and one partner and together they performed routines for various age groups. This team also produced original learning materials such as activity books, children’s books, and interactive website content for the school year.

Two new initiatives are planned for FY 2019. The group will contact schools that have not requested presentations in several years. The target is to make 50 new-school presentations. Also new, the team will bring recycling lessons to the thousands of home-school students through a series of recycling expos around the City. These events have a goal of reaching 2,000 home school students of all ages.
The Environmental Services Division managed the operations of collection stations for bulky materials and household hazardous waste (HHW), downtown collections, dead animal collections and closed landfills.

In FY 2018, there were four bulky drop-off facilities around the City. The sites were available at no cost to City residents that pay the Environmental Fee on their CPS Energy bill. Visitors were allowed one cubic yard of construction debris and four cubic yards of bulky items. Metals, tires and cardboard were separated into appropriate containers. Full containers were transported to the landfill or the recycling center. Freon was extracted from refrigerators and air conditioning units and staff members were certified to perform this extraction process.

In FY 2018 these centers saw increased customer usage by 8% over FY 2017. Nearly 138,000 cars visited the sites. Recycling in cardboard (148 tons), tires (143 tons), and metal (1,128 tons) rose collectively by 12% over the prior year.

The SWMD operated one permanent HHW drop-off center, a second one opened once a month and mobile events were held three times per year. The Environmental Fee also allowed rate-payers to dispose of household hazardous waste at any of these locations. Common HHW materials included automotive fluids, batteries, solvents and cleaners, pool chemicals, oil filters, pesticides, paint and electronics. Although the centers experienced a decrease in customers by 4%, tonnages actually increased by 22% compared to FY 2017. A total of 35,156 cars visited these facilities.

The Environmental Services Division collected dead animals seven days a week. Seven employees servicing different areas of the City collected and disposed of the animals at a certified landfill. There were 19,667 collections made in FY 2018.

This division oversaw the downtown routes for garbage and recycling daily collection from the City’s central business district. Daytime garbage collections for the year were 246 tons and for the night collections, the volume was higher at 253 tons. Recycling was higher in the day shift at 35 tons versus 23 tons at night.

The landfill operations section of the division was responsible for landfill closure requirements at seven closed City landfills, in compliance with TCEQ’s Subchapter K Post Closure Care Sec.330.453. Some post closure care requirements included mowing, subsidence remediation and perimeter fence repair. Six personnel and 32 pieces of equipment maintained this unit.
MAKING AN IMPACT
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
Increased Volume at Drop Off Centers
This SWMD division provided repair and maintenance services to more than 1,900 pieces of equipment, both off-road and on-road, primarily for the Solid Waste Management Department, Transportation & Capital Improvements (TCI) and the Parks & Recreation Department. It operated four heavy duty truck shops and one heavy equipment shop. A staff of 90 shop personnel and 16 support staff worked to keep garbage trucks, sweepers, pothole patch trucks, aerial bucket trucks and other equipment ready to use when departments needed them.

The division established a mission to be known for consistently providing high quality, responsive service to ensure their customers’ success. The division closed 30,238 work orders and issued 432,916 parts last year.

A significant improvement in FY 2018 was the implementation of the Daily Availability Report for TCI. This provided the division’s internal customer with a daily status of mission critical equipment. The purpose was to show the total number of units by type, availability and a count of those out of service. Fleet Operations end the year with a 90.6% Availability Rate.

Managers prioritized the focus on increasing in-house repairs and reducing outsourced maintenance this year. A reduction in vehicle out of service down time was the successful result. Transportation alone, moving vehicles to and from distant repair facilities, caused long delays in getting units in service. The managers challenged their teams to do more work, both faster and more efficiently.

These heavy equipment mechanics reduced the division’s dependency on outsourcing work by 30% in 2017 and
another 30% in 2018. Through comparisons of cost and repair time, these women and men proved work done in-house was often a better value than outsourcing.

Construction of two new service centers and heavy truck shops began in FY 2018. The bays will be equipped with WiFi to take advantage of telematics and other wireless technologies for mechanical diagnostics. An overhead crane will permit heavy lifting from any bay along the entire length of the shop. Electrical connections throughout will allow welding in any service bay. The new shops’ designs provide for more space and will include a substantial amount of natural light. Combined with excellent ventilation, this can greatly improve the work environment.
SERVICING OVER A MILLION CARTS
GARBAGE COLLECTION
Driving Over Seven Million Miles
Due to the competitive demand for Commercial Driver License (CDL) drivers nationwide, the SWMD in collaboration with the City of San Antonio’s Human Resources Department established a truck driver apprenticeship program in February of 2018. This program for workforce development was designed to cultivate the next generation of employees and fill vacant driver positions in many City departments.

Customer calls regarding missed collections continued to be addressed. The Department serviced approximately 355,000 single-family households. Each had three bins for weekly collection which equated to 1.5 million collections per month. The goal for missed collections was less than 10 calls out of every 10,000 collections. In FY 2017, the actual number was 10.40 but in FY 2018, that was reduced to 9.09. Adding more trucks and drivers to decrease the size of the newly-created organics routes contributed to reducing the calls.

Selected candidates were hired as temporary collections employees and then for 18 consecutive weeks spent up to 720 hours gaining hands-on training and experience toward earning a Class B CDL. This program was at no cost for the participants. (Securing a CDL can cost as much as $5,000.) For the first class, 168 individuals applied, 26 were interviewed and eight were chosen. Two applicants passed the CDL test and were hired by the City.

The SWMD had over 1 million carts active for curbside collection in FY 2018. The cart downsizing program began to gain momentum in February 2018 as marketing campaigns were deployed. The number of customers that requested exchanges for their 96 gallon brown trash cart to a smaller one peaked in August as the proposed rate changes were unveiled during the City’s budget process. A total of 14,230 customers downsized in FY 2018.

The SWMD’s ‘walk-up service’ program this past year. People who needed special assistance moving carts from their homes to the curb applied for this service. Since medical documentation was required an audit of this database began in FY 2018 to capture any changes in information or enrollee status.

In FY 2019 the Department will relocate two existing service centers to new locations. Analysis of traffic patterns and route driving time is currently underway. By February 2019, the Department expects to change the boundaries that divide the four service centers as well as the days of collection for some residents. This effort will maximize current SWMD resources while also factoring in San Antonio’s predicted growth.

“The program did an excellent job preparing me for the job, and I’m looking forward to the experience.”

Aaron Scott Darnold
The Inspections Division was created to help bring awareness of the recycling and organics programs’ guidelines in order for those programs to be successful. Through personal conversations and leave-behind materials the inspectors helped to ensure people knew what specific items could or could not be accepted. There were 27 inspectors in FY 2018 that, combined, inspected 732 routes. On average, each inspector spoke with five residents per day.

When recycling and organics mistakes were found, an inspector left a ‘Friendly Reminder’ tag. This past year, 55,776 informational tags were issued for simple, smaller infractions. After repeated violations though, warning tags and then ultimately fee tags were left for residents. This unit also inspected curbside collections for the brush and bulky programs. Among the nearly 134,264 piles inspected, 3,491 violations were discovered.

A major improvement to efficiency in FY 2018 was the move to right-hand drive jeeps for the team. Without having to park and walk a route, the inspectors were able to maneuver alongside a cart, raise the lid, and make the inspection with the window down and without leaving the vehicle. Regular vehicles prevented the team from completing almost 54% of a route. The right-hand drive jeeps raised the completion rate to very near 100%. Inspectors reached more customers in less time while getting more familiar with the routes.

Taking photos of non-accepted items that cause contamination was a helpful tool for customers to understand the specifics of the recycling and organics programs. Received at the end of FY 2018, new phones with better cameras helped the team show customers unaccepted items in a cart with clearer detail. Much like two-way radios, the ‘push/talk’ feature allowed them to communicate with drivers as well.

A major initiative for FY 2019 will be to place new cart stickers on all customers’ green and blue carts. This endeavor will be done by hand for over 700,000 stickers. Current stickers are worn but more importantly, the new stickers will have much clearer instructions on what can be accepted in the blue and green carts. The improvement will make this particular customer touch point easier to understand. Additionally,
The SWMD thinks of the inspectors as promotores, or ambassadors of recycling and organics information. All customers are encouraged to stop any inspector and ask questions. If an inspector sees the same residence making the same mistakes, he or she will seek an opportunity to initiate a conversation and address any confusion.
The open Marketing Manager position was filled in August 2017 placing a higher importance on strategy. Campaigns and initiatives began to be developed around fundamental marketing tenets: (i) consistency in visual identity; (ii) clarity and simplicity in messaging; and (iii) effectiveness and innovation in deployment.

This division launched several campaigns in FY 2018. The first, called The Core 4, focused on recycling basics and appeared in the San Antonio market from October through December. It was promoted using a completely new tactic for the SWMD, on-screen in theater advertising. The thirty-second commercial played 40,000 times during the holiday blockbuster season and companion digital banners generated over 1.1 million more impressions. From these banner ads, 16,125 people clicked through to the website for more information.

This format was repeated during the summer blockbuster season with the next campaign that promoted the cart
downsizing program. Running from the opening weekend of *Solo: A Star Wars Story* through *Mission: Impossible – Fallout*, the new commercial played 70,000 times on screens and in lobbies and generated 2.5 million digital impressions from May through July.

Earlier in the year, other new customer touch points for cart downsizing included spots on Super Bowl Sunday, the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup. Also new, the campaign utilized internet-delivered entertainment such as Roku and Hulu – an innovative category of media referred to as ‘premium’. Digital campaigns incorporated the technique known as geo-fencing to reach customers on all their devices based on location, shopping and entertainment preferences. The division also completely transformed the existing site sarecycles.org into a more engaging and informative residential recycling resource for San Antonio.

The cart downsizing campaign was an excellent example of ROI for marketing efforts. Prior to launching the campaign, only around 200 customers per month were requesting exchanges. Only two months after the campaign deployed, exchanges rose to over 1,500 transactions per month. For the month of August, the amount of exchanges peaked at over 4,600 requests. The campaign also included English and Spanish radio, television and outdoor. The year-end total for FY 2018 was 14,230 customers opting for smaller trash carts, which was the real success of the campaign – less tonnage to the landfill.

The communications activities of the division included the creation of a new internal quarterly communicue, Message from the Director. Director David. W. McCary sent a one page letter electronically across the Department that highlighted important employee relations topics. External communications metrics for FY 2018 included the SWMD being covered 41 times in local media. The more important stories were Hurricane Harvey relief efforts, the cart downsizing program, the apprenticeship program, ReWorksSA and also some investigative reporting on two billing issues.
The Organics Division reached its one year anniversary of city-wide implementation in April of 2018. From October 2017 to September 2018, nearly 60,000 tons of material was captured through the curbside program as customers used either a 48 gallon or a 96 gallon green cart for organic material collection.

Participation steadily increased and the rejection rate improved. The seasonality of the program created large fluctuations in tonnage. During the fall foliage and spring seasons, tonnage increased by wide margins. In FY 2017, the rejection rate was slightly over 39%. For FY 2018 the rejection rate dropped significantly to approximately 25% or roughly 15,000 tons of material. (When the volume of a load contains 10% or more of non-program material, it can be rejected by the composting facility. The good material co-mingled in these loads is forced to be taken to the landfill.)

The SWMD drivers played a vital role in the tracking and prevention of rejected loads. Drivers discovered contamination through direct observation and from the trucks’ in-cab cameras. Addresses where non-program material was noticed were logged and the data was used to send information to those residents for education and instruction. Over 33,000 addresses were logged this past year. Some customers received a $25 fee after repeated warnings of violations or a $50 fee specifically if the contaminate was diapers.

Approved organic material was taken to the SWMD’s composting processing partner and composted material was made available to citizens at no charge at community events. In FY 2018, 576 bags of compost were distributed at Council Town Halls, HOA meetings and seasonal events such as Spring Bloom and Earth Day.

Another program was introduced in FY 2018. Small kitchen bins were made available by request to any customer free of charge. These bins were designed to capture organic food materials in smaller amounts conveniently in the kitchen or pantry areas.

The organics program played a major role in the success of the cart downsizing program as customers maximized their material in the green cart and reduced the amount of space needed in their brown trash cart.
One of the Few Cities with a Program
KEEPING SAN ANTONIO SUSTAINABLE
ORGANICS
Among several highlights in the Planning and Innovation Division, a redistricting analysis yielded results that laid groundwork for decision-making not only in FY 2018 but many years into the SWMD’s future operations. The current service center boundaries were established in the 90’s. They were assessed by the team and then redrawn to optimize route efficiencies for all centers, including the two new ones that were already under construction.

A time and distance analysis was performed on each of 1,869 points across the City in relation to disposal sites and service center locations. There were many factors and layers to this analysis resulting in the development of a data-driven redistricting model focused on minimizing cost and maximizing operation ability.

Tonnage data was another key focus for Planning and Innovation. The process...
for retrieving analytics on this data was streamlined and enhanced so that tonnage information was updated and visualized in real time. Reports were also improved to be more accessible and custom-designed.

The City of San Antonio remained in contract with the company Republic for the processing of single-stream recyclable materials collected via the City’s curbside collection program. The City and Republic conducted characterization audits of the City’s curbside single-stream collection program. Results from these audits were used to determine commodity and residual percentages, by quarter for the fiscal year. Equally important, the audits were used to determine the amount of materials Republic actually recovered through processing and sorting of material. The City required Republic to recover 95 percent of program recyclable materials.

Planning and Innovation was the lead division that developed the SWMD FY 2019 budget presentation which was made to City Council in August 2018. Almost 10 weeks were spent on determining content, creating a narrative, building in compelling visuals and coordinating many hours of rehearsal. Council accepted and adopted the SWMD FY 2019 budget as presented.
The Department continued to track progress toward a 60% recycling rate by 2025. (The recycling rate is derived from the percent of everything collected compared to the amount that is able to be diverted from the landfill.) For FY 2018, it was just under 33% against a goal of 38%.

In FY 2018, two new metrics were developed to reveal a more in-depth and holistic story of how San Antonio is transforming into a more sustainable city. How much material from each home went to the landfill? The calculation for this revealed that over the past ten years, residents have been sending less to the landfill. In 2008, the household average was 1.45 tons but for FY 2018, that decreased to 1.08 tons.

However, because recyclable materials have been getting steadily lighter, one ton in FY 2018 actually consumed much more area. For example, ten years ago, one ton of aluminum equaled around 64,000 cans. Last year, 68,000 cans made one ton which meant that even if 4,000 more cans were recycled, the recycling rate percentage (for aluminum) was exactly the same.

The second new metric introduced last year documented the percentage of correct recycling and organics participation that could have been diverted to the landfill. This measurement was determined by, not only including all of the materials recycled, but also adding the correct material that was delivered to the recycle or organics plants but was not accepted or recycled because it was co-mingled with unaccepted material. This is the residential performance rate. It was 36% for the past year which is higher than the actual year end recycling rate and closer to the FY 2018 recycling goal of 38%.

Because of the recent and extreme shifts in the global recycling markets, the emphasis in FY 2018 was on clean recycling. Contaminated recycling commodities no longer had lucrative world-wide markets. The SWMD had several customer information touch points in development in 2018 which were scheduled for rollout in FY 2019. These included; (i) improved, clearer messages on new cart stickers; (ii) a separate cart sticker concisely stating contamination fees; (iii) easier to understand cart warning tags and; (iv) simpler customer letters and flyers that are mailed to specific addresses where violations were discovered.

Recycling remained the least expensive disposal option for the City. Tonnage of material to the landfill incurred an expense of $23.75 per ton in FY 2018. Tonnage to the recycling facility was $2.64 per ton.
At year end FY 2018, the SWMD had reduced preventable accidents by over 50%, from 140 in FY 2017 down to 67. The goal for personal injury preventable accidents was 5 this past year, and the year closed with only 4. Several innovations helped the Safety Division reach these targets. Supervisors championed this cause even more enthusiastically through training and incentives. The commitment to safety became a renewed cultural attribute within the workforce.

An updated safety training handbook was produced and greatly improved the ease of use and comprehension of the material. In addition, employees with years of safe service were recognized with a Safety Bonus Award. Individuals with five years of zero preventable accidents received $500, six years equated to $600 and so on up to $1,000 in safety bonus pay. In FY 2018, 97 employees received these financial merits. Of the recipients, 39 had safe driving records of ten years or more and were each awarded the full $1,000. Employees were also recognized with a safety medallion displaying their years of safe driving from one to ten years. These were given to 244 Department staff.

In collaboration with the City’s Office of Risk Management a pilot program known as the Safety Management System (SMS) was launched. (SMS is a continuous process designed to identify employees’ exposure
to risk and reduce it.) The goal was to identify ways to reduce or eliminate the risk by changes in work practices or processes and then document the results. SMS proved it could reduce risk which in turn reduced accidents and injuries.

Part of the SMS was a job hazard assessment analyzed by position. (For this industry, the International Standards Organization’s (ISO) certification level is designated 45001.) Beginning in March of 2018, the SWMD committed to a goal to meet or surpass that certification level by 2020.

The Safety Division also focused on efficiency over the past 12 months. One example related to employees working to secure a CDL. The SWMD was certified by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to conduct the driving test portion of that process. After an employee received the permit, he or she began practicing. Performing the driving test in-house reduced the normal 45 day CDL fulfillment down by an average of 17 days.
OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

MATERIAL RECOVERED VS. LANDFILLED

567,547.81 Total Tons Collected Curbside

CART CONTAMINATION

46,924 Recycling Warnings

1,730 Recycling Fines

7,388 Organics Warnings

109 Organics Fines
RECYCLED TONNAGE BY PROGRAM

Material Collected
Material Rejected

58,355 Total Tons Collected

CURBSIDE ORGANICS (TONS)
The Solid Waste Management Department (the ‘SWMD’ or the ‘Department’) serves approximately 355,000 single-family San Antonio households, employs 725 individuals and manages two major funds: (i) the Solid Waste Operating and Maintenance Fund which was $117.9 million in FY 2018; and (ii) the Fleet Services Fund which was $18.9 million.

The SWMD is responsible for the collection of municipal solid waste generated by its customers, the residents of the City of San Antonio (the ‘City’). Primary collection services include: (i) weekly curbside collection of residential garbage, recyclables, and organics; (ii) semi-annual residential collection of brush and bulky items; and (iii) other services by request. The Department also provides downtown litter basket collections. Additionally, the Department: (i) administers the City’s household hazardous waste (HHW) programs; (ii) monitors and maintains closed City landfills; and (iii) operates two brush recycling centers and four bulky waste drop-off centers.

Supplemental services by request include out of cycle collections, special leaf collections and a walk up service for customers with physical challenges. To support neighborhood clean-up efforts, community organizations can request large containers through the Dial-a-Trailer (DAT) program. Quarterly, the Department sponsors free landfill days to provide more opportunities for residents to conveniently and safely dispose of their solid waste. Assistance is provided as needed for severe weather clean-up, illegal dumping and recycling at some of San Antonio’s larger city-wide special events. The Department also has community outreach and commercial recycling divisions.

The Solid Waste Operating and Maintenance Fund is an enterprise fund, requiring that the services provided to the customers are supported by fees charged to the customers for those services, making the fund self-supporting. The majority of its revenue is from the Solid Waste Fee and the Environmental Fee, both of which are placed on a customer’s monthly CPS Energy bill. Additional revenues are derived from waste hauler permit fees, brush recycling fees, and the sale of mulch and recyclable materials. This fund receives no funding from taxes.

The Fleet Services Fund is an internal services fund. The Department is responsible for the maintenance and repair of over 1,900 heavy equipment vehicles for various City Departments. In this role, the Department ensures that vehicles are kept operational and ready for use throughout the City by using an integrated and programmatic service delivery approach.

This information is current as of the print date December 2018.
MISSION STATEMENT

The Solid Waste Management Department provides reliable collection and sustainable services to our community, safely and professionally, while protecting San Antonio’s environment, resources and the health of its citizens through dedicated and caring teamwork.