

Geosyntec's solid waste advisory professionals have successfully completed over 50 cost-of-service and rate study assignments, helping our clients improve the efficiency of their collection and recycling programs.

Doing more with less has become a mantra within solid waste agencies, while an increasingly-engaged population repeatedly calls for more recycling and implementation of zero waste goals. Before changes to existing services can be considered, a study of rate structures and cost-of-service analysis should be undertaken to better understand cash flow implications. By allowing multiple "what if?" questions to be addressed, such studies can help managers overcome myriad issues, such as:

- Declining or negative fund balances
- Difficulty gaining political support for rate increases
- Skyrocketing fuel, equipment, and insurance costs
- Problems with customer service
- Calls for full or part privatization or consolidation with neighbors
- Barriers to entry for new markets or services

Based on our experience, well-executed studies also provide opportunities for introduction of smart technologies, cost optimization, improved customer service, and enhanced long-term financial planning. Our customized models can help decision makers in analyzing operational outcomes and key performance indicators and comparing the financial results to industry benchmarks.



Geosyntec's solid waste rate studies incorporate detailed scenario modeling to evaluate "what if" questions.



Representative Clients

Geosyntec's team members have provided a wide range of financial modeling assignments as part of rate structure and cost-of-service studies, including for:

- City of Dunedin, FL
- City of Idaho Falls, ID
- City of Killeen, TX
- City of Lakeland, FL
- City of Pensacola, FL
- City of St. Augustine, FL
- City of West Palm Beach, FL
- City of Springfield, MA
- City of Lawton, OK
- City of Oklahoma City, OK
- City of Virginia Beach, VA
- City of Waco, TX
- City of Augusta, GA
- Charlotte County, FL
- Escambia County, FL
- Indian River County, FL
- Lake County, FL
- Orange County, FL
- Oklahoma City, OK
- Miami-Dade County, FL
- Anne Arundel County, MD
- Mecklenburg County, NC
- Dalton-Whitfield SWA, GA
- SWACO, Columbus, OH

Selected Project Experience

Solid Waste Service Analysis and Rate Study CITY OF PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

The City's Solid Waste Department was seeking guidance and a fact-based method for rate setting for an upcoming five-year planning period. The project team was engaged to identify key data, develop and execute an analysis process, and provide recommendations. Using citywide data, the team developed a customized rate model to analyze the future financial performance of the City's refuse collection program. In the process, we assessed current operational and business practices and potential operational changes to collections as well as transfer station operations. Based on the study, the team was able to make firm recommendations for revising residential rates and identify several costs savings and revenue enhancement measures that could be achieved. Findings were presented to the City Commission and incorporated into the business plan for the Solid Waste Department.

Cost-of-Service Study DALTON-WHITFIELD SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY, GEORGIA

The Authority owns and operates highly integrated solid waste infrastructure, including two landfills, a MRF, a commercial landfill gas-to-energy project, public drop-off centers and transfer facilities, and a countywide recycling program, within a flow control environment. Geosyntec conducted a financial analysis of system components, providing strategic consulting on a range of issues to help the Authority complete their annual budget cycle and establish pricing for their services. We reviewed detailed revenue and cost inputs, analyzed trends and finer details related to issues such as staffing and equipment maintenance, and developed a model to estimate the timing and cost of major capital projects based on expected waste volumes. We also provided consulting support to help the Authority understand the greater regional marketplace and positively dissuade assertions that their services are not cost competitive. Our expertise provided perspective and a factual basis that allowed adjustments to fee structures and reserve accruals to be identified based on long-term financial and operational trends.

Cash Flow Analysis MERCED REGIONAL SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY, CALIFORNIA

Prior to engaging the project team, the Authority had operated a deficit over several years despite several disposal rate increases. This trend was the result of the decline in revenue, loss of a major customer, operational inefficiencies, and inadequate unencumbered cash reserves to cover bond debt and liabilities. In addition, the heavy equipment fleet was leased and aging and capacity expansions at their landfill sites would be needed within five years. The team developed a pro-forma model to help the Authority prepare a long-term cash flow analysis and assess whether or not funds were available from operations to forestall a bond issue for the capital improvements as well as to fund adequate emergency reserves. The pro-forma modeling effort enabled decision makers to project costs of various capital, fleet, and waste flow options. Key among the lessons learned was establishing a "rainy day fund" to provide a long-term financial backstop for unforeseen events.



For more information

Marc Rogoff, Ph.D.
Tampa, Florida
813-558-0990
mrogoff@geosyntec.com

Jeremy Morris, Ph.D., P.E.
Columbia, Maryland
410-381-4333
jmorris@geosyntec.com

Bill Gaffigan, MBA, CVA
Kennesaw, Georgia
678-718-4732
bgaffigan@geosyntec.com

about us

Geosyntec Consultants is a specialized technical advisory and consulting engineering firm that works with private- and public-sector clients to address their complex challenges involving the environment, natural resources, and civil infrastructure. Our vision of success builds on our internal culture of technical excellence and long-held belief that exceptional client service coupled with exceptional project solutions will result in long-term, mutually rewarding business solutions. We bring our clients the dedicated, personal service of a small, local company backed by the experience and resources of a larger firm with global presence.

Geosyntec 
consultants

engineers | scientists | innovators

geosyntec.com