Quaker Valley Council of Governments

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Quaker Valley Council of Governments: Waste Management Contract Recommendations©

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Executive Summary

The Quaker Valley Council of Governments (QVCOG, or COG) is a nonprofit organization consisting of 17 local municipalities located along the Ohio River in southwestern Pennsylvania. Alongside other regions throughout Allegheny County, the COG is dedicated to aiding the local communities. Working with combined local governance, the COG is governed by a Board of Delegates, with one voting delegate per member of the community.

This project focuses on the **comprehensive review of the existing waste management contract in order to identify the key factors contributing to rising costs** and to develop actionable recommendations aimed at reducing those costs. The analysis was conducted within the context of a changing regional market, where increasing contract prices and limited competition—evidenced by Waste Management (WM) being the sole bidder for the current contract—have created challenges for maintaining cost efficiency. A central priority of this project was to ensure that any proposed cost-reduction strategies would not compromise the quality and reliability of waste collection services expected by residents across the QVCOG municipalities.

To achieve this, the team examined critical components of the current contract, including the billing structure, municipal participation, and the handling of specialized waste streams such as recycling, hazardous household waste (HHW), and e-waste. Particular attention was given to how the joint bidding structure and the expansion of the COG from 12 to 17 municipalities impact overall costs, as well as how mechanization and service logistics influence pricing. Based on these findings, the project outlines targeted recommendations that address inefficiencies in the current structure, explore alternative billing approaches, and provide strategies to improve cost predictability and long-term financial sustainability for the QVCOG and its member communities.

Based upon this analysis, the Report recommends **Option #1 (Segmented Bidding Model)** as the primary strategy for QVCOG. This approach is expected to to produce multiple benefits, including reduced costs through pricing aligned with local service conditions, increased flexibility in responding to variations in infrastructural limitations of individual municipalities, and enhanced market competition resulting from the potential to attract additional bidders. In addition to the primary recommendation, the report provides information regarding **secondary options,** including individual municipal bids supported by QVCOG, an expanded joint participation model, and a structured implementation plan across short-term, mid-term, and long-term phases.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report analyzes the current waste management contract of the Quaker Valley Council of Governments (QVCOG) to identify key cost drivers and structural inefficiencies. The ultimate purpose is to develop, based on actual data, viable suggestions to reduce the costs associated with providing waste collection services to member communities through QVCOG while continuing to provide reliable service.

To determine the best way to update the contract to be more cost-effective while continuing to maintain quality service across the Quaker Valley region, the QVCOG has partnered with a team of graduate students at Chatham University as a part of the Strategy for Business Resilience capstone course. This report will present the findings of the team from analyzing the current contract to determine factors driving costs and reviewing local trends of waste management. As the current contract is set to expire in 2026 and costs continue to rise under limited market competition, there is an urgent need for QVCOG to review and reformulate the structure of its contract. Furthermore, due to the lack of competitive bidding in the regional solid-waste collection industry, the possibility of obtaining price relief through contractual renegotiation is also severely restricted; therefore, it is imperative to explore all possible alternatives when structuring future contracts. The success of this project will depend on developing workable recommendations from which member local governments can achieve cost savings and maintain sustainable service outcomes. Given the complexity of balancing cost efficiency, service quality, and long-term sustainability, it is necessary to look at both the structural elements of the current contract as well as the broader market and environmental issues that affect how this contract will operate.

1.2 Situation Analysis

1.2.1 Current Challenges

The QVCOG is currently facing a critical decision point as its existing waste management contract approaches its expiration in 2026. Rising costs, limited vendor competition, and varying service needs across municipalities have placed increasing pressure on the current contract structure. These challenges raise an important question: whether the existing unified contract model can continue to deliver cost-effective and reliable service across the region. While these challenges are specific to QVCOG, they reflect broader sustainability and operational pressures that are increasingly shaping waste management systems at the local and municipal level.

The challenge that comes with creating a more sustainable world sounds daunting and is often perceived as being a global task. While this is certainly true, the very concept of sustainability is an adaptive one; one that must be flexible and change to best suit specific social, economic and environmental contexts[1]. Indeed, many sustainable developments and breakthroughs are being achieved all around the world, ranging from large-scale initiatives to smaller, localized energy-savings solutions[2]. However, this also highlights the importance of localized, community-level solutions, as many sustainability challenges must be addressed at the regional and municipal level.

In the United States, the current federal administration has begun rolling back several key steps taken towards a more sustainable future on a global scale, including withdrawing from the Paris Agreement and dismantling the Environmental Protection Agency's environmental justice office[3]. As such, U.S. federal efforts towards adapting to climate and other sustainability issues are significantly scaling back. Despite this development, steps can still be taken by local governments to implement their own policies and initiatives, both at state and community levels. Many U.S. states have already implemented several of their own initiatives to regulate environmental impacts.

Some of these have led to substantial changes, such as the state of California developing significant plans to cut back on their fossil fuel usage and carbon footprint, while other states are slower to adapt, preferring to fall back on the "status quo" of what has been business as usual for them[4]. In particular, the state of Pennsylvania recently exited the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. State governor Josh Shapiro has declared that this was done for budgetary reasons, but this future would still leave the fourth-highest greenhouse gas [GHG] emitting state in the U.S. without a primary climate policy[5]. Despite some states having made more progress than others, relying on higher-scale policies and efforts will not produce significant results in the long run. Rather, some of the best ways to create meaningful change can start at the local, community level. For QVCOG, these broader changes are affecting QVCOG's contracts by increasing their costs, creating additional regulatory uncertainty, and requiring new types of operations in waste management. Therefore, sustainability for QVCOG is no longer just an environmental consideration; rather, it has become a cost and contract management issue that can only be addressed with the creation of more efficient and flexible contractual structures.

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[1] Pvblic. (2025, February 28). *Local Solutions, global impact: How communities are leading the way in Sustainability*.
[2] Andrejevaite, G. (2021, June 18). *Top 10 sustainable initiatives, Sustainability Magazine*. Sustainability Magazine.
[3] Borunda, A., Brady, J., Copley, M., Hersher, R., Simon, J., & Sommer, L. (2025, November 10). *Countries are gathering for climate negotiations. here's where the U.S. stands.*
[4] *Huseynli, O. (2024, January 4). Leading the Way: California's Trailblazing Efforts to Fight Climate Change. Earth.org*
[5] *Koranda, N. (2025, November 14). Pennsylvania exits Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, worries environmental activists. Fox43.*

Many local municipalities have begun to implement their own policies and create their own efforts to make their communities more sustainable. While these can be done individually, it can prove difficult for this approach to have substantial impacts and change for the wider area they inhabit, and often, it takes additional help for this to happen. In Allegheny County, primarily consisting of the greater Pittsburgh region in southwestern Pennsylvania, several communities have joined together to form their own council of governments [COG]. These COGs work together towards bolstering livelihood in Allegheny County, but they also oversee initiatives being done in their own areas of the county. A council of governments consisting of 17 municipalities has been formed in Quaker Valley [Quaker Valley COG, or QVCOG], a region in northwestern Allegheny County that follows PA Route 65 North along the Ohio River. The nonprofit organization primarily focuses on creating cost-effective programming for its member communities, as well as working together on larger, regional tasks. Their latest endeavor consists of updating the bid for their municipal waste contract. The current contract, first going into effect in 2022, is set to expire at the end of 2026. With contract prices elsewhere experiencing inflation, as well as how the QVCOG has changed since the previous iteration of the contract, they seek to update the contract to better reflect these changes. This contract renewal represents a critical inflection point for QVCOG to strengthen both its operational efficiency and regional coordination. As market conditions evolve and costs continue to rise, maintaining the current structure may limit the organization's ability to deliver long-term value to its member municipalities. By reassessing the contract framework, QVCOG has the opportunity to implement a more strategic, data-driven approach that aligns with current needs and future growth. Ultimately, this effort is not only about cost reduction, but also about ensuring consistent service quality, improving vendor performance, and reinforcing the collective strength of a regional model that can drive more sustainable and efficient outcomes for the communities it serves.

1.2.2 Stakeholder Analysis

The proposed restructuring of the contract framework impacts various stakeholders across the QVCOG system, with each group having distinct priorities and interests.

Municipalities aim to reduce the costs and maintain stable service quality.

Residents prioritize reasonable costs and reliable services.

Waste management companies are primarily concerned with operational feasibility and profitability.

The QVCOG leadership seeks to balance between maintaining coordination, cost efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

Since these conflicting priorities can create trade-offs among cost, service quality, and operational feasibility, it is important to establish clear criteria to evaluate how to balance these factors. To achieve this, it is essential to set clear goals and measurable metrics for objective assessment of proposed alternatives. As a result, evaluating alternative contract structures requires a framework that accounts for these competing interests. To achieve this, it is essential to set clear goals and measurable metrics for objective assessment of proposed alternatives.

1.3 Goals/Metrics

The primary goal of this project is to identify contract strategies that reduce cost while maintaining service quality across QVCOG municipalities. To evaluate whether the proposed recommendations are effective, following criteria will be used:

- Cost savings per municipality will be evaluated by comparing the difference between current contract pricing with predicted cost reduction under proposed contract structures
- Vendor participation
- Service reliability
- Operational feasibility

2. Conclusion

QVCOG is operating in a context where federal and state sustainability efforts are limited, increasing the importance of local action. At the same time, rising costs, limited vendors competition, and expiring waste management contracts create both pressure and opportunity. By aligning stakeholder priorities and using clear performance metrics, QVCOG can redesign its contract to improve cost efficiency while maintaining reliable service. This analysis provides a structured, third-party perspective to support informed decision-making and strengthen communication with stakeholders.

Local leadership matters more than ever

Limited federal and state action makes local initiatives essential for driving sustainability and operational improvements.

Costs are rising, creating urgency

Inflation and market changes make the current contract structure less efficient and in need of revision.

Stakeholder priorities must be balanced

Municipalities, residents, and vendors have competing interests that require data-driven trade-off decisions.

Contract redesign is a strategic opportunity

A new contract structure can reduce costs while preserving service quality and operational feasibility.

3.Research and Analysis

3.1 QVCOG Current Contract Analysis

When analyzing the current waste management contract, the primary goal was to discover any significant factors that were driving up costs. It is important to note that Waste Management [WM] was one of only two bidders on the current contract, set to expire at the end of 2026. Contract prices across southwestern Pennsylvania have been experiencing a trend of rising prices ; combined with limited bidder competition, this has increased the urgency of evaluating whether the current contract structure remains cost-effective for participating municipalities. As a result, ensuring stable, long-term costs for the QVCOG while continuing to ensure that collection services are handled with the quality the residents have come to expect was a priority for this analysis. The main aspects of the current contract that were examined were the composition of the contract itself, the billing structure, the participation of the individual municipalities, and the special types of waste collection.

3.2 Key Cost Drivers

While the costs were the most crucial factor of this project, the writing of the contract itself was still examined both to determine these cost-driving factors, as well as ensure the stability of the language presented. When analyzing the composition of the contract, four categories were determined to be among the most important ones: the scope of work, management for problem solving, interests of the contractors, and environmental awareness. All of these categories were found to be well represented within the contract. Management with customer service and work adjustments due to service disruptions or missed pickups were clearly defined and laid out, all identifiable parties were well established with their respective responsibilities, and environmental awareness was highlighted, with procedures in place for possible spillages and other mishaps, as well as the contractor being responsible for informing the public as to what items were and were not acceptable for curbside waste and recycling, respectively. Structurally, the contract was sound; however, the analysis showed that the primary weaknesses were not in the contract language itself, but in the cost implications of how services were structured and priced. These findings suggested that the key issue was not whether the contract should exist, but whether the current unified structure was the most efficient way to deliver services across municipalities with different conditions.

3.3 Joint Bidding Structure and its Limitations

The current bid is structured in a joint fashion, in which all the municipalities that fall under the COG are part of the contract. The time in which the contract was first written in 2021, however, does not reflect the current setup of the COG, as 12 municipalities are represented in the current contract, but the COG now consists of 17 communities.

The initial theory was that adding more municipalities to a joint bid would reduce costs through economies of scale, but the analysis showed that differences in service conditions, particularly mechanization constraints, can instead increase costs under a single shared structure. Mechanization refers to a mechanical arm being attached to the truck that automatically collects curbside waste and recycling, rather than requiring manual pickup. This concept is becoming further implemented across many municipal waste companies.

Quaker Valley, however, cannot universally accommodate for this innovation, as several communities have streets that are too narrow to allow for mechanized trucks to operate. Bellevue, Ben Avon, Emsworth and Sewickley boroughs in particular are the densest communities and contain narrower streets that would not allow for a mechanized truck to collect curbside waste[7]. This suggests that local infrastructure conditions, rather than municipal size alone, may function as an important hidden cost driver within the current contract structure. This is part of the reason why Waste Management was the winning bidder on the previous contract, as they were the only company with the infrastructure and fleet availability to accommodate this at a relatively affordable price. This limitation supports consideration of a different bidding structure, particularly one that groups municipalities according to similar service conditions rather than requiring all communities to remain under a single uniform bid.

3.4 Comparing Payment Options

The contract is currently structured in a manner that allows for two payment options: the participating municipalities paying the contractor, or the participating municipalities' residents will pay the contractor. These options account for general curbside waste and recycling, as well as EOW recycling, hazardous household waste (HHW), and e-waste. An important distinction that was found is that the billing rate for all of these collections was based on how many residential housing units were collected from, rather than from the tonnage that was collected. This is most likely due to the municipalities bidding collectively as opposed to individually. The two payment options were found to have significant cost differences, with the option for the residents paying the contractor being almost a million-dollar difference over a five-year payout. Option A [the municipality pays the contractor] was estimated to cost $4,438,469.16 across five years, while Option B [the residents pay the contractor] was estimated cost $5,398,442.64, a significant increase over the first option[7].

This cost gap was one of the clearest findings of the analysis and suggests that payment structure itself is a major driver of overall contract cost. In addition, while the data did show a greater increase in costs for municipalities with a greater number of residential units, the relationship between greaterq residential unit numbers and increased costs was complex and not in direct proportion; which further demonstrates how the current pricing models used by municipalities participating in this program do not equitably distribute costs among all of the municipalities (see Figure 1 below).

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[6]Personal Communication *(Small Truck Routes)*, Michelle Harkins, 2026
[7]Personal Communication *(Contract Files),* Rebecca Kiernan, 2026

3.5 Billing Structure and Municipal Variation

An additional element that factors into this pricing analysis is the collection rates for the municipalities. Regardless of the payment option selected by the municipalities, the payment rate is calculated based on the number of residential units that pickups would be collected from, rather than being determined based on the tonnage of waste collected. The number of residential units in each township varies from as few as 40 to as many as 2,920. Four of these communities have selected payment Option A, while the remaining 8 have selected payment Option B. Regardless of the choice, the monthly payment rate for these municipalities has been increasing with each passing year[8]. This further reinforces concerns that a unit-based pricing structure may not accurately reflect differences in actual service usage across municipalities.

This billing structure, based on residential unit counts rather than actual waste volume, may limit cost efficiency and reduce incentives for waste reduction at the household level. Municipalities with fewer units may face higher per-unit costs, while larger municipalities may benefit from economies of scale, creating disparities across the region. Additionally, as collection costs continue to rise, volume-based pricing models have been increasingly recognized as a more equitable and performance-driven approach to municipal solid waste management[9].

3.6 Cost Distribution

The monthly payment rate increases for almost every township under the current contract, with the one exception being Haysville Borough, which was also the least densely populated community with only 40 residential units reported. For the 11 other communities, the average monthly increase per unit ranged from $0.70 to $1.10, and the increase in annual spending for the municipalities over the course of a year ranged from $58.50 to as much as $2,380 (Figure 1). While billing payment choice and the number of residential units are both primary factors in these ranges, average monthly rate increase does not directly relate to the number of residential units, indicating that cost increases are not driven solely by scale. Larger boroughs such as Sewickley and Bellevue did experience the highest spike in average cost increase per year due to their higher unit numbers, but the data suggests that there are other underlying factors which may also be playing a factor in the difference in monthly rate pricing between different municipalities, specifically service conditions and/or limitations on municipal infrastructure.

[8]Personal Communication *(Monthly Rate Data),* Michelle Harkins, 2026
[9]U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2020). *Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT).*

Trash Collection Rates								2024	2025	2026	Avg Increase	Avg Increase
								Per Unit	Per Unit	Per Unit	Per Unit	Per Mncpy
Municipality	Units	Billing	Trash	Bulk	Recycling	AYD	Discount	Monthly Rate			Avg MR change	$/year
Aleppo Township	603	Municipal	Unlimited	All	EOW 18-Gal Bin	Yes	No	$19.75	$20.54	$21.37	$0.81	$488.43
Avalon Borough	1368	Individual	Unlimited	1 per wk	EOW 18-Gal Bin	Yes	No	$23.86	$24.82	$25.81	$0.975	$1333.80
Edgeworth Borough	423	Individual	Unlimited	1 per wk	Weekly 18-Gal Bin	No	No	$21.10	$21.94	$22.82	$0.86	$363.78
Glen Osborne Township	219	Municipal	Unlimited	1 per wk	Weekly	Yes	No	$22.51	$23.41	$24.34	$0.915	$200.385
Glenfield Borough	60	Individual	Unlimited	1 per wk	EOW 18-Gal Bin	Yes	No	$23.86	$24.82	$25.81	$0.975	$58.50
Haysville Borough	40	Municipal	Unlimited	1 per wk	EOW 18-Gal Bin	No	No	$16.96	$16.96	$16.96	$0.00	$0.00
Sewickley Borough	1268	Individual	Unlimited	1 per wk	EOW 18-Gal Bin	Yes	No	$23.86	$24.82	$25.81	$0.975	$1236.30
Leet Township	529	Individual	Unlimited	1 per wk	EOW 18-Gal Bin	Yes	No	$26.62	$27.69	$28.79	$1.085	$573.965
Ben Avon Borough	596	Individual	Unlimited	All	Weekly 18-Gal Bin	Yes	15%	$26.62	$27.69	$28.79	$1.085	$646.66
Bellevue Borough	2920	Municipal	Unlimited	1 per wk	EOW 18-Gal Bin	Yes	No	$19.84	$20.64	$21.47	$0.815	$2379.80
Emsworth Borough	702	Individual	Unlimited	1 per wk	EOW 18-Gal Bin	No	15%	$22.46	$23.36	$24.29	$0.915	$642.33
Kilbuck Township	262	Individual	Unlimited	1 per wk	EOW 18-Gal Bin	No	15%	$18.44	$19.17	$19.85	$0.705	$184.71

Figure 1: *The breakdown of the 12 municipalities that fall under the current waste management contract. Each community has listed the number of residential units, the billing payment option, collection types, and monthly payment rates from 2024-2026. The green boxes to the right highlight how much the average monthly payment increases as well as how much more money each municipality would be spending per year based on these rate increases.*

This variation in cost increases highlights underlying inefficiencies in the current pricing structure, where rate adjustments are not consistently aligned with scale or service demand. The lack of a clear correlation between the number of residential units and cost increases suggests that other factors, such as contract design, billing option selection, and fixed service costs are driving disparities across municipalities. As a result, some communities may be disproportionately affected despite similar service levels, underscoring the need for a more standardized and transparent pricing framework that better reflects actual cost drivers and promotes greater equity among QVCOG members.

3.7 Local Contract Comparisons

In addition to examining the current contract structure of the QVCOG, other local contracts were analyzed across Allegheny County to determine what trends were taking place, both regarding contract structure and how collection services may have been influencing changes.

The North Hills COG has a waste management contract that also expires at the end of 2026, and the previous structure was similar to Quaker Valley's, featuring the participating municipalities all forming a joint bid[10]. Ross Township was recently reported to have withdrawn from this arrangement, however, and the joint structure soon collapsed thereafter. Now, the North Hills municipalities are exploring the idea of bidding individually, which has the potential to accommodate more specific parts of the contract that a joint bid will be unable to accomplish, allowing Ross Township and the other communities to bid according to their individual needs.

This highlights a broader shift toward more flexible contract structures, suggesting that a single joint contract may no longer be the most effective approach when considering the different needs and constraints municipalities have. Considering the multiple individual needs that some of Quaker Valley's municipalities have presented, this may prove to be a viable and more efficient path for the region as well, particularly in addressing the limitations of a single unified contract structure.

3.8 Sustainable Development Goal Alignment

This project and the suggested improvements for this new contract align with several of the sustainable development goals from the United Nations. This alignment further emphasizes the broader environmental and public health relevance of the proposed contract improvements[11]. Because the main goal of the project is to update the waste management contract for a local group of municipalities, this aligns with Goal #11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. The goal of the contract is to ensure that service coverage is maintained while ensuring that costs are kept down as much as possible. An updated scope of work will allow for the continued support of a clean environment for the residents and municipalities; for example, a contract that encourages more efficient pickup routes by haulers will reduce gasoline usage and CO2 emissions in the QVCOG communities.

[10]Personal Communication *(Contract Files),* Rebecca Kiernan, 2026

[11]United Nations. (2015). The 17 goals | sustainable development. United Nations. https://sdgs.un.org/goals

The waste management emphasis also aligns with Goal #3: Good Health and Well-Being, specifically with Target 3.9 “By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination”. This project explores multiple options for safe disposal of hazardous household waste, and contract terms require the haulers to remediate any spills of standard waste as well. The collaboration of QVCOG municipalities on this project also aligns with Goal #6: Clean Water and Sanitation, particularly Target 6b: “Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management” and indicator 6b1: “Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management”.

Figure 2. *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 3, 6, and 11.*

Based on these findings, the following section outlines recommended strategies to address the identified cost inefficiencies and structural limitations of the current waste management contract ahead of the upcoming bid.

4. Indicated Actions

4.1 The Future Role of the QVCOG

With all of these factors taken into consideration, there are several recommendations to consider when the new contract is supplied to prospective bidders. Currently, the role of the QVCOG in the contract is described as managing a single, unified contract for the participating municipalities. Current contract research has suggested that this approach is no longer sustainable for the long-term, and a new arrangement of bidding would better serve the participating communities’ individual needs. Rather than directly managing one unified contract, the QVCOG could instead act as more of a facilitator for its communities. This way, it will be easier to provide contract frameworks, support bidding negotiations, and work towards sharing the best practices amongst the participating municipalities. Contract frameworks, in particular, lend themselves to this style of management well.

Primary Recommendation - Option #1

Projected increasing contract costs, the structure of the current contract, and the subsequent fallout of other local contract practices suggest that restructuring the QVCOG's contract distribution would provide numerous improvements. Rather than one single unified contract, the best practice might be to create several smaller bids for groups of municipalities. The service area should be restructured into groups that share similar characteristics with one another. These could include population density, infrastructure, accommodation for mechanization, recycling needs, or other factors that may suit this revised structure. Grouping similar areas would allow pricing structures to better reflect local conditions, resulting in a more equitable system. This setup would not only allow for greater flexibility for how each municipality may want their curbside waste collected but would also allow for greater competition among prospective bidders. Because Waste Management was one of only two bidders on the current contract, this left very little negotiation available for pricing options. Dividing the QVCOG municipalities into smaller sub-groups, would help to provide more opportunities for multiple bidders to enter into the bidding process, would create more competition in each municipality and ultimately make it easier for the different municipalities to choose which bids are best suited to their needs. Overall, this strategy has the most opportunity to produce cost savings and increase operational efficiencies from all possible options.

Milestones:

Short-Term
(1-2 Months)

- Collect and analyze municipal data (density, service needs)
- Develop initial segmented contractstructures
- Draft sample contracts for each group

Mid-Term
(2-5 Months)

- Validate groupings with municipalities
- Refine segmentation and contract designbased on feedback
- Release segmented RFPs
- Evaluate vendor proposals

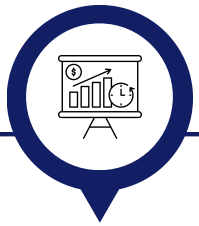
Long-Term
(5+ Months)

- Award and implement contracts by group
- Monitor performance, pricing, and servicequality
- Use insights to refine future contract cycles

Secondary recommendation - Option #2

Given current conditions, it is possible that municipalities may choose to pursue individual bids instead of participating in a joint bid in an effort to achieve a lower contract cost. To support the goal of reducing costs for member municipalities, it is recommended that QVCOG offer bid writing services for those municipalities that require individual bids. While joint bids may not always be the most appropriate option due to differing service needs across communities, preparing individual bids can be both expensive and time-consuming for municipalities. For this reason, QVCOG could provide centralized bid writing support to member municipalities, helping to reduce the administrative burden and improve efficiency while still allowing municipalities the flexibility to pursue individual bidding when needed.

Milestones:



Short-Term
(1-2 Months)

- Design bid support program (scope,resources, roles)
- Develop templates & guidance materials
- Identify municipalities pursuing individual bids

Mid-Term
(2-5 Months)

- Provide hands-on bid drafting and submission support
- Ensure compliance with requirements
- Assist with vendor evaluation
- Gather feedback to refine tools and process

Long-Term
(5+ Months)

- Evaluate impact (cost savings, efficiency,satisfaction)
- Institutionalize program
- Expand as a standard service offering

Alternative Approach - Option #3

If the QVCOG determines that a large group bid remains the most feasible option for the upcoming contract, it is recommended to launch a Municipality Enrollment Program. The goal of this initiative is to encourage greater participation in the joint bid within the QVCOG, as a higher number of participating municipalities has historically strengthened economies of scale and ultimately reduced overall service costs. Increased collaboration may allow the QVCOG to operate more efficiently and negotiate better rates across services, particularly in areas such as waste collection. To support this effort, it is anticipated that by demonstrating the advantages of being part of QVCOG (such as reduced service rates and increased operational efficiency) through clear communication to the governmental agencies responsible for each municipality, the value of working collectively can be shown. In the long term, these strategies may support the development of a broader regional waste management authority, enabling greater coordination beyond QVCOG.

Short-Term
(1-2 Months)

- Define program strategy & value proposition(cost savings, efficiency)
- Develop communication materials
- Conduct outreach to recruit municipalities

Mid-Term
(2-5 Months)

- Host info sessions & stakeholder meetings
- Confirm municipal participation
- Present cost-benefit analysis (joint vs.individual bids)
- Finalize participant group

Long-Term
(5+ Months)

- Execute consolidated joint bid
- Leverage economies of scale
- Evaluate cost savings, program effectiveness
- Refine future enrollment strategy

Across all three options, a key preparatory step would be the development of sample contracts for each scenario. These would be shared with potential bidders in advance to obtain more accurate market-based cost estimates, helping QVCOG refine its final contract strategy before implementation.

4.2 Additional Restructuring

Because the pricing model was one of the primary factors discovered to be driving costs, a revision of these options would also help to reduce the restructured contract costs. Rather than relying on the number of residential units to determine the payment for specific collections, the volume of waste tonnage that is collected should be considered to measure monthly rates. This model would make costs fairer between municipalities while also being more transparent, as communities would be paying more in line with how often the contractor services are utilized. This in turn could also encourage waste reduction, particularly amongst the communities who find themselves generating the most amount of municipal waste. Notably, cost increases do not directly correlate with the number of residential units, highlighting inefficiencies in the current unit-based pricing structure.

Regardless of how monthly rates are determined, it is our recommendation that the contractor is paid by the municipality instead of directly by residents. In the previous contract (2022-2026), municipalities that paid collectively were offered lower base collection rates over the 5-year contract compared to those municipalities where residents paid directly. The total cost difference between the two options was estimated at over $900,000 in favor of municipality payments as shown in Figure 3 (below). Based on this data, it is reasonable to assume that paying as a municipality in the upcoming contract will result in significant cost savings compared to residents paying the contractor directly.

	Option	Description	Total combined cost (5 years)
	Option A	Municipality Pays Contractor	$4,438,469.16
	Option B	Residents Pay Contractor	$5,398,442.64

Figure 3. *Comparison of payment options in the 2022-2026 contract as estimated by the contractor for >5000 residential units. The estimated cost difference was $959,973.48.*

In addition to standardizing payment methods, negotiating a shorter contract with the potential for extension may reduce costs, as this provides potential haulers with flexibility and therefore reduced risk in evolving market conditions (e.g. mechanization, rising fuel costs). This contract structure also provides the COG with more flexibility if members decide the joint bid was not in their best interest—the short contract term would allow municipalities to pursue alternative bidding options without potentially causing the contract collapse experienced by the North Hills COG. It is also anticipated that a regional waste authority will be established within the next few years, so entering into a shortened contract will allow the QVCOG to explore the opportunities that may arise from this new entity in the near future.

Furthermore, it may be worth exploring if specialized services such as hazardous household waste (HHW) and e-waste disposal should be separated from the main contract. These services currently factor into the overall cost for both payment options and contribute significantly to their current prices. While these services should not be completely removed, if these services were managed separately outside of the main contract, it would allow for municipalities to better manage how often they are collected while continuing to provide residents with these services they have come to appreciate.

Managing these services separately would allow municipalities to outsource to specialized organizations (e.g. Pennsylvania Resources Council) that host collection events for non-standard waste, which may lower costs and give municipalities more flexibility to only pay for what they need. Having set collection days for these services will also reduce gasoline usage and emissions by haulers compared to haulers making special trips at resident request; therefore, outsourcing special collections could provide both monetary and environmental benefits to residents of Quaker Valley.

Recycling is another area of opportunity for cost reduction; under the previous contract, WM did not accept glass items as part of their recycling services, so a separate contract with Michael Brothers was needed. Recent communication from WM indicates that the recycling policy may have changed to include glass waste, so we recommend that QVCOG evaluate WM's current recycling policy to determine if it meets the needs of municipalities and potentially eliminate the need for an additional contract[12].

[12]Personal Communication *(Answers from Waste Management),* Michelle Harkins, 2026

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