

Common Solid Waste Designation Questions

February 21, 2019

Why is the County Considering the Designation of Solid Waste to Red Wing?

- MPCA requires all counties to have a Solid Waste Plan that supports the State's Hierarchy of Solid Waste management (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Compost, Waste-to-Energy, then Landfill).
- Red Wing's resource recovery facility creates fuel to generate energy (which is higher in the MPCA's hierarchy than landfilling).
- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) will allow the County's Bench St. Landfill into their Closed Landfill Program if the County Designates all Solid Waste (trash) generated in the County to be processed by a 'resource recovery facility in the County.' Red Wing operates such a facility.
- Processing trash through a resource recovery facility is environmentally a better final solution for trash disposal.

What if I never put any trash in the Bench St. Landfill.
Why should I be interested in this issue?

- If you are paying property taxes (or pay rent) in Goodhue County you should be interested in this issue because the County is responsible for the landfill.
- If the County needs to clean it up, those costs will come from property tax dollars.
- If the County designates trash to Red Wing (and transfers cleanup costs to the State) then all citizens in the County will likely see an increased cost in disposal of their trash.

What Will it Cost to Clean up the Bench St. Landfill?

- Clean up costs are unknown.
- So far, a similar landfill in Winona has cost over \$14,000,000 to clean up, monitor, and maintain.
- Annual monitoring and maintenance costs in Winona are approximately \$500,000 per year and will continue for an undefined period of time.
- 10 years from now their total costs could approach \$20,000,000.

Why is it important that the County's Bench St. Landfill be in the State's Closed Landfill Program (CLP)?

- The Bench St. landfill does not have a liner under it. Liquid called 'leachate' has seeped out of the landfill. The MPCA could require the County to clean up the landfill if testing shows the leachate is significantly polluting ground water.
- County residents have paid about \$7 million in solid waste taxes so far and will continue to pay with every trash pickup. In part, this tax funds the CLP's cleanup projects
- If not in the CLP, County residents are fully responsible for this cleanup without financial benefit from the solid waste taxes paid.
- If the Bench St. landfill is in the CLP, the State as a whole is responsible for this work, and solid waste taxes would be used for the cleanup. The County residents would benefit from the solid waste taxes they have and will continue to pay.

Impact to Haulers

- All haulers operating today can continue to be licensed and operate if solid waste is designated to Red Wing.
- All solid waste collected in the County must be delivered to Red Wing's Solid Waste Campus.
- All solid waste will be charged the same rate of \$118/ Ton,
 - those haulers who enter into an agreement with the City and County will receive a starting rate of \$108/Ton.

As a Hauler I Have Routes on the Border of Goodhue and Another County. Why Can't I Just Take All the Trash to that Other County?

- The Legislation that will allow Goodhue County's Bench St. landfill into the CLP specifically says the County needs to designate all trash from the County be sent to a 'resource recovery facility' located within the County.
- If materials are sent to other facilities, then the Bench St. landfill would not be allowed into the CLP and Goodhue County would be totally liable for its cleanup without the use of solid waste tax revenues.

What Happens to the Trash Taken to Red Wing?

- The trash goes through the following process:
 - Removing hazardous materials, removing and recycling materials that can be used in a future product vs new natural resources.
 - Grinding the remainder of waste into Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) used in Waste-To-Energy facilities to generate electricity.
 - Less than 20% is placed in a landfill as either 'fine' materials that won't burn, or ash.
 - This process greatly reduces the use of landfill space and minimizes potential future landfill cleanup costs.

Will Trash Disposal Cost More Under Solid Waste Designation?

- Possibly and likely.
- Haulers would be required to take all trash collected in the County to Red Wing's Solid Waste Campus and pay Red Wing's 'tipping fee' / ton to accept their trash.
- Red Wing's initial tipping fee is \$118/ton (\$108/ton for those who sign contracts to bring all the waste they collect in the County to Red Wing)
- Red Wing's tipping fee covers the costs to provide a facility, equipment, manpower, utilities and other fees to fully process the trash to create a fuel used to generate electricity.
- The tipping fee at Red Wing will likely be more than the fee that haulers currently pay if they are simply sending the trash to a landfill.
- Haulers may increase their customers' disposal rates to cover this tip fee increase.

How Much More Will it Cost to Deliver Trash to Red Wing?

- A hauler's bill consists of their cost to collect trash, dispose of that trash along with overhead and a profit.
- We don't know what haulers are paying to dispose of trash today.
- It costs more to process the trash and create a fuel to generate electricity than it costs to simply place trash in a landfill, therefore Red Wing's disposal fee will likely be higher.
- We cannot predict how much haulers will increase their fees since we don't know what they are paying for disposal today or how they will adjust their profit margin.
- One example we know of is the City of Wanamingo who asked their hauler who quoted them a \$2.00/house/month increase.
- If a hauler's cost to dispose of your trash doubles, their bill should not double since the disposal is a smaller portion of their total costs compared to collection costs.

How Does the Cost of Disposing Trash at Red Wing Compare to the Cost of Cleaning up the Bench St. landfill (1 of 2)

- Based on a 3 year average, 26,527 Tons of trash were reported in the County. 73% was delivered to Red Wing. Their current tip fee is \$90/Ton and will increase to \$108/Ton (for contract haulers). The increase disposal costs based on the tip fee increase is:
 - $0.73 \times 26,527 \times (\$108 - \$90) = \$348,564$
- Assuming the tip fee for trash delivered elsewhere (100% - 73% = 27%) will increase by \$50/Ton when paying \$108/Ton at Red Wing, the tip fee increase is:
 - $0.27 \times 26,527 \times (\$50) = \$358,115.$
- Total increase to bring to Red Wing based on tip fee increases = \$706,679/yr.
- Over 20 years: $\$706,679 / \text{yr.} \times 20 \text{ years} = \$14,133,570$

How Does the Cost of Trash Disposal at Red Wing Compare to the Cost of Cleaning up the Bench St. landfill (2 of 2)

- COST TO CLEAN UP BENCH ST LANDFILL

- The cost to clean up the Bench St landfill and future maintenance costs are unknown.
- The \$14 million figure from Winona is an example from a similarly sized fairly recently cleaned up landfill. The level of certainty that the Bench St cleanup will be \$14 million is very low.
- The Winona landfill cleanup cost is at \$14 million and increases another \$500,000 per year. At this rate, their total will be about \$19 million in 10 years, in 20 years it's about \$24 million, and continuing for an undefined period.
- If the County keeps the Bench St. landfill, County property taxes will pay the maintenance costs for an undefined period.
- COMPARISION
- It is virtually impossible to compare the additional costs of taking trash to Red Wing for 20 years against the cost to clean up the Bench St. landfill and pay annual maintenance fees for an indefinite period.

How Much More Will it Cost Me If I Haul My Trash to Red Wing?

- Red Wing will charge a prorated fee based on \$118/ton.
- If you were to sign a contract to bring all your trash to them, they will give you a prorated fee based on \$108/ton.

Can Red Wing Raise Rates at Will and Use These Revenues for Other City Projects?

- Red Wing has an 'Enterprise Fund' for their resource recovery facility.
- Revenues (tipping fees) paid into this fund can be used only to pay expenses required to provide a facility, equipment, manpower, utilities and other fees to fully process the trash to create a fuel used to generate electricity.
- Funds cannot be used for other purposes.
- This fund is subject to auditing by both the County and the State auditors.

What are the Environmental Impacts of Processing Trash at Red Wing?

- Red Wing will process trash by removing hazardous materials, removing and recycling materials that can be used in a future product vs using new natural resources. The remainder of the trash is used in Waste-To-Energy facilities to generate electricity.
- The waste-to-energy facilities have stringent EPA and MPCA regulated equipment to minimize pollution from their facilities.
- This reduces volume of the land required for disposal and many of the harmful materials are destroyed when burned in the waste-to-energy facilities thus reducing the possibility of ground water contamination from the ash.
- Less than 20% is placed in a landfill as either 'fine' materials that won't burn or ash which greatly reduces potential future landfill cleanup costs.

What are the Environmental Impacts of Landfilling Trash?

- Landfilled trash is simply placed in a landfill.
- Most modern landfills have liners to collect leachate and vents to release methane (which is 28-36 times more harmful to the environment than CO₂ according to the EPA).
- There is a potential that landfills currently in use could leak someday, contaminate groundwater and need to be cleaned up.
- Goodhue County residents could be responsible for a portion of the costs to cleanup a current landfill if it pollutes the environment. If the landfill owner can prove a percent of the trash in a landfill came from Goodhue County, a specific City or Township or business, they could sue that generator for that percent of the cleanup costs.

How Do These Options Impact Natural Resources?

- Products we buy are made from natural resources. We use a portion of the product and throw away as trash the remainder of the product (packaging, the product once it's broken, etc.)
- Processing trash through Red Wing's facility removes materials that can be reused. The remainder is used as fuel to generate electricity. The process uses the vast majority of the natural resources in the original product that we purchased.
- Landfilling trash recovers none of the remaining natural resources, they are wasted. Also they consume another natural resource called 'land'.

How will the County Board Decide to Designate Solid Waste or not?

- The County Board's decision will depend on many factors including:
 - Consider regulatory issues of meeting MPCA expectations in support of the State's solid waste management hierarchy.
 - Consider the impact of having the Bench St. landfill in the Closed Landfill Program
 - Consider the environmental impacts.
 - Consider the financial impacts.
 - Consider the impacts on the haulers and their customers.

Estimated Timeline

- The Designation Ordinance will likely become effective first thing in 2020, once the following tasks are complete:
 - The County has completed negotiations with haulers and other governmental agencies as required by state statute.
 - Red Wing has completed their construction project to upgrade their facility to handle all of the trash generated in the County.
 - The County and the State have finalized an agreement that the Bench St. landfill will be accepted into the Closed Landfill Program.
 - The State approves the County's Designation Ordinance.

Can I Just Burn My Trash or Throw it in a Road Ditch?

- MS 17.135 allow owners and operators of land used for farming to burn solid waste generated from their household or as part of their farming operation in a nuisance-free manner .
- The following items cannot be burned: demolition debris, rubber, tires, plastics (except plastic baling twine), household hazardous waste, appliances, batteries, railroad ties, treated lumber, composite shingles, tar paper, insulation, composition board, sheetrock, wiring, paint, oils or similar materials.
- Throwing your trash in a road ditch is just plain illegal.

Still Have Questions?

- Contact either:
- Greg Isakson or Willie Root at (651) 385 – 3025