



## City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

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Kurt D. Hodgen  
City Manager

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### STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor Byrd and City Council Members

FROM: Kurt D. Hodgen, City Manager

DATE: November 19, 2014

RE: Report and Recommendation on Solid Waste Disposal

With the closing of the Resource Recovery Facility (RRF), the City has been exploring options for the disposal of its solid waste. Staff has put together what we consider to be the three most viable alternatives. The first two are “conventional” landfill operations, the third is a large-scale, recycling “campus” that can separate up to 75% of the waste for recycling with the remaining amounts going from there to a conventional landfill (the City would pay a tipping fee only at the recycling center; any trash that has to be land-filled is paid for by the center).

An obvious question is, “why not just take our trash to the Rockingham County landfill?” The answer to that question is that we do not have a contract with the County that would allow us to do that. There is a contract currently in place with the County that allows us to take trash that can’t be burned at the RRF to the landfill at a rate of \$50 per ton. The contract also has provisions allowing us to take all of our trash there for certain periods of time when the RRF is shut down for maintenance or emergency situations (also at \$50 per ton). However, language in the contract states that the agreement becomes void if the City is no longer operating the RRF. We are now “officially” no longer operating the RRF. The County has continued to work with us in accepting all of our trash while we determine our long-term disposal option.

If we continue to operate our solid waste collection program (separate pick-up of trash and recyclables) as we always have, a new contract with Rockingham County would appear to be the best alternative as we would simply drive our collection vehicles to the landfill, dump them there and pay \$50 per ton. Going to any other conventional landfill would require us to operate a transfer station where we would dump our trash onto a tipping floor, reload it onto tractor trailers and transport it out of the area, thus subjecting ourselves to both a tipping fee and a transportation fee.

The third option, that of sending our trash to the “recycling campus”, appears to be the best overall cost option for the city. In this case, the City would discontinue its practice of separately collecting “regular” trash and recyclables and collect both in the same truck at the same time. From there the combined trash would be taken to a transfer station, loaded onto tractor trailers and transported to the recycling center where all the recyclables would be separated and only the trash that couldn’t be recycled would be landfilled. The center we are considering projects that 75% of our waste collected could be recycled which is a significant increase over our current recycling rate. Going this route would allow us to discontinue operating our curbside recycling program and the sorting station.

The attached spreadsheet includes information on the tentative tipping fees (and where applicable, hauling fees) for the three most viable options, as well as our tentative solid waste program operating budget under each option.

While staff would be inclined to recommend the “van der Linde” option at this time, the purpose of this report is to provide Council with financial and operational data for this issue and let you have a couple of weeks to think about it. It would be our goal to have a final decision from Council at the December 9 Council meeting.

Attachment