



Solid Waste Management System

The Department's Mission: To responsibly deliver, enhance and maintain vital infrastructure and services for the good of our community

Revenue Sources for Funding Programs

Solid waste management is a public utility just like those existing to provide water, treat wastewater, manage surface water, and supply electricity.

The city provides residents and businesses several solid waste management programs that are supported by a variety of funding sources.

| PROGRAM | SUPPORTING REVENUE SOURCES | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------|---------------|
| | Utility User Rates | Occupation Tax | Permits or Other Fees | Sale of Material(s) | Grants | Revenue Bonds |
| Bluff Road Landfill | Yes | - | - | - | - | Yes |
| Transfer Station | Yes | Yes | - | - | - | Not To Date |
| Construction & Demolition Landfill | Yes | Yes | - | - | - | Yes |
| North 48th Street Landfill (Closed) | - | Yes | - | - | - | Yes |
| Landfill Gas Collection and Utilization | - | Yes | - | Yes | - | Yes |
| Composting | Yes | Yes | - | Yes | Yes | Not To Date |
| Health Department Solid Waste Programs | - | Yes | Yes | - | Yes | - |
| "On-Site" Recycling | - | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Not To Date |
| Recycling (Drop-Offs, Education) | - | Yes | - | Yes | Yes | Not To Date |

Utility User Rates

Utility user rates are set through a deliberative process that closely aligns with the city's and department's budget process.

Periodic rate increases are necessary because user rates are the primary funding source for utility systems, which do not receive funding from the city's general fund.

- Utility user rates fund the operation and maintenance costs and a majority of the capital improvements of a utility system; as the community continues to grow, so does the utility and its expenses.
- The additional revenue collected from a user rate increase is directly proportional to the increased expense of sustaining and maintaining the utility system.

The Department of Public Works and Utilities tries to minimize the monetary impact to the average residential and business customer when increasing rates.



Landfill Fees

When disposing of waste at the Bluff Road Landfill, private waste haulers are assessed the landfill user rate and an occupation tax, both on a per ton basis.

- The public indirectly pays these fees through service charges assessed by private waste haulers.
- Revenue from the occupation tax is never used to support the Bluff Road Landfill. It instead supports non-landfill related facilities and programs made available to the community.

Although increasing on January 1, 2017, Lincoln's landfill fees are cheaper than those of surrounding landfills.

- The landfill user rate will be \$20.75 per ton.
- The occupation tax is \$11.00 per ton.
- Lincoln's total landfill fee of \$31.75 per ton is more than \$5 less per ton than the average fee of eight nearby landfills.

While landfill user rates and occupation tax adjustments more directly affect waste haulers, the department also considers the impact per household.

- A landfill user rate increase of \$3.00 per ton costs an average household of four in Lincoln approximately \$0.50 more per month.
- For an average household of four in Lincoln, landfill fees will amount to approximately \$5.30 per month in 2017.

The Bluff Road Landfill is expected to close in 2032. Significant funds will be required to construct a landfill cap, manage the closed landfill forever, and permit and construct the next landfill.

- The cost to properly close and manage the current Bluff Road Landfill is estimated to be \$22 million in today's dollars.
- A large portion of the \$3.00 landfill rate increase will be reserved to meet at least 50% of the future expenses relating to the existing landfill.
- A small portion of the \$3.00 landfill rate increase will be reserved for permitting and constructing the next landfill, which is estimated to cost \$10 million in today's dollars.

The Costs of Operating the Landfill



Capacity

Similar to other utilities, the landfill regularly expands to meet the needs of the community. Space for disposal of waste must be constructed roughly every 3 years, and includes the expansion of liquids and gas collection piping, and monitoring systems.



Operation & Maintenance

Currently, the landfill manages, at its peak, 400 trucks per day and 1500 tons of waste per day. That is a truckload of waste arriving on average once every 85 seconds.



Regulatory Compliance

The landfill is one of the most heavily regulated utilities under environmental laws, and it requires constant monitoring for compliance with the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, as well as for requirements in the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and Integrated Waste Management Act. Again, as the landfill grows, so do the compliance obligations and the level of effort. For instance, an 8.5 mile path is walked every quarter to monitor for methane gas emissions. The length of the pathway grows as the landfill continues to fill with waste. This obligation will continue long into the future as methane emissions must be monitored, even after the landfill is closed.

The North 48th Street Landfill, which closed more than 30 years ago, continues to be monitored today for landfill gas migration and air emissions, as well as surface water and groundwater quality.



Long-Term Management

Materials put into the landfill do not disappear. They are "entombed" and stored indefinitely, which makes waste diversion, such as recycling, an important element of solid waste management. Aggressive and sustainable waste diversion decreases the amount of material that has to be managed forever.