

# Solid Waste Management Program Overview

## Mission

To protect the public interest through solid waste management planning and regulatory oversight of the County's refuse ordinances by providing efficient and effective collection, recycling, and disposal of solid waste for customers in an environmentally responsible manner.

## Connection to the Countywide Strategic Plan

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted the first-ever Countywide Strategic Plan on October 5, 2021. The Countywide Strategic Plan serves as a road map to help guide future work, focusing on the 10 Community Outcome Areas that represent the issues of greatest importance to the community, and uses the County's One Fairfax equity policy to invest in people and places that have limited access to opportunity. On February 18, 2025, the third Annual Report on the work of the strategic plan was released to the public. The report contains point-in-time progress highlights for each of the community outcome areas, plus a number of additional initiatives to embed the elements of the plan within department-level work. The report also includes a Year Three Implementation Model, including five data dashboards and data stories that are being replicated across all of the outcome areas, which will engage hundreds of County subject-matter experts to identify and champion the specific strategies that will move forward to implementation under the direction of the County Executive's Steering Committee. For more information on the Countywide Strategic Plan, please visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan). The Solid Waste Management Program primarily supports the following Community Outcome Areas:

### Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Areas



Community Outcome Area	Vision Statement
Effective and Efficient Government	<i>All people trust that their government responsibly manages resources, is responsive to their needs, provides exceptional services and equitably represents them.</i>
Environment and Energy	<i>All people live in a healthy sustainable environment.</i>

## Focus

The Solid Waste Management Program (SWMP) is responsible for the management, oversight and long-range planning for all refuse collection, recycling, and disposal operations within the County. During FY 2024 and FY 2025, SWMP developed a Zero Waste Plan for Fairfax County. The County's Community Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) has prescribed a goal for Fairfax County to divert 90 percent of all waste from landfills by 2040. The new plan includes a road map to Zero Waste by 2040 by establishing a menu of available technologies, strategies, and system improvements with their associated costs. It is anticipated that funding needs will increase significantly as Zero Waste programs are implemented.

In FY 2024, SWMP completed a budget analysis to review past years' expenditures and projected FY 2025 personnel, operation, and capital reinvestment needs for SWMP's services to continue to operate at current levels. This analysis projected major budgetary shortfalls across Fund 40130, Leaf Collection, Fund 40140, Refuse Collection and Recycling Operations, and Fund 40150, Refuse

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Disposal. SWMP has historically used reserve funds to stabilize rate increases, however, the analysis revealed that rate increases would be necessary to maintain operations. As a result, rate levels increased in FY 2024, FY 2025, and FY 2026 for the Solid Waste Funds to ensure continued successful operation of SWMP, maintain necessary reserve balances, and account for the increased funding needs of the Zero Waste program and environmental regulation requirements.

Current SWMP operations include a County-owned and operated refuse transfer station, two closed municipal solid waste landfills, a regional ashfill operated by the County, two recycling and disposal facilities, and equipment and facilities for refuse collection, disposal, and recycling operations.

Fund 40130, Leaf Collection, provides curbside vacuum leaf collection within Fairfax County's approved leaf collection districts. In FY 2026, approximately 25,000 properties are included within these districts. Revenue for Fund 40130 is derived from a levy charged to property owners within the leaf collection districts. The FY 2026 levy of \$0.019 per \$100 of assessed real estate value remains the same as the rate set in FY 2025.

Fund 40140, Refuse Collection and Recycling Operations, provides for collection of waste and recycling from approximately 45,100 individual households within Fairfax County's approved sanitary districts. Revenue to support residential collection operations is derived from the refuse collection fee. In FY 2026, the collection fee increased from \$555 to \$610 per home, to assist SWMP in meeting increased labor, equipment, and contractual costs necessary to operate the collections programs.

The Recycling Program is funded through Fund 40140, Refuse Collection and Recycling Operations, and Fund 40150, Refuse Disposal (described below). The Recycling Program is responsible for:

- Overall management of solid waste reduction and recycling programs;
- Future recycling programs and waste reduction systems; and
- Ensuring sufficient disposal capacity by diverting recyclable items from the waste stream.

As part of the County's recycling program, the Fairfax County SWMP operates two staffed recycling locations at the I-66 Transfer Station and the I-95 Landfill Complex.

Fund 40150, Refuse Disposal, funds operations at the I-66 Transfer Station, which receives refuse collected in the northern and western portions of the County, and transports the refuse to Reworld Fairfax, LLC in Lorton, Virginia. When the Reworld facility is unavailable, waste is transported to alternative landfills. This fund also supports the Recycling Program. In FY 2026, the disposal rate increased from \$79 per ton to \$90 per ton, to assist SWMP in meeting increased labor and contractual costs necessary to operate the programs and to provide sustainable services.

Fund 40170, I-95 Refuse Disposal, funds the operation of the I-95 Landfill Complex, which accepts only ash from waste combustion. The landfill, constructed in four phases, complies with federal and state standards, including double liners and leachate collection systems. In FY 2026, the Refuse Disposal fee increased from \$31.40 per ton to \$32.90 per ton. Operational and maintenance costs for environmental controls at the closed portion of the landfill are expected to rise. These activities ensure compliance with permits and environmental regulations.

Detailed descriptions, discussions, and funding requirements for each of the Solid Waste Funds can be found on the pages following the SWMP Overview.

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**Solid Waste Operations Fee Structure<sup>1</sup>**

	Fund 40130, Leaf Collection	Fund 40140, Refuse Collection and Recycling Operations	Fund 40150, Refuse Disposal	Fund 40170, I-95 Refuse Disposal <sup>2</sup>
<b>FY 2026 Fee</b>	\$0.019/\$100 Assessed Property Value	\$610 Curbside	\$90/Ton, System Fee Recycling and Disposal Center	\$32.90/Ton
<b>FY 2025 Fee</b>	\$0.019/\$100 Assessed Property Value	\$555 Curbside	\$79/Ton, System Fee Recycling and Disposal Center	\$31.40/Ton
<b>Who Pays</b>	Leaf District Residents	Sanitary District Residents	Private Collectors, Residents and County Agencies	Fund 40150 and Participating Jurisdictions

<sup>1</sup> There are numerous special rates that have been negotiated and implemented as needed, which are not reflected in the structure above. Examples include varying miscellaneous charges for yard debris (e.g., brush, grass, and leaves), tires, and others.

<sup>2</sup> The Ash Disposal Rate is set in contract with Reworld and adjusted at the beginning of each fiscal year since the residual disposal rate is escalated after the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is published in early July for each fiscal billing year. The new rate for each fiscal year becomes effective every July of each year after CPI data is available.

## Performance Measurement Results

### Effective and Efficient Government

The program consistently exceeded the targeted service quality measure of 95 percent of its customers' rating refuse service as good or better.

### Environment and Energy

The program achieved a recycling rate of 43.9 percent in CY 2024, well above the state-mandated recycling rate of 25 percent. The actual number of tons delivered to the Reworld facility was 727,415 tons in FY 2024. The upgraded facility allows Reworld to have a more efficient way to process waste from SWMP and produce more energy, which is then sold to the local utility company.

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Indicator	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Estimate	FY 2026 Estimate
<b>Effective and Efficient Government</b>						
<b>Financial Sustainability and Trustworthiness</b>						
Collection Cost per home collected in the sanitary districts	\$426.85	\$458.45	\$479.93	\$506.95	\$622.98	\$629.32
Cost per ton for disposal operations	\$68.51	\$76.94	\$78.46	\$80.89	\$89.86	\$91.75
<b>Customer Satisfaction with County Services</b>						
Percent of customers or citizens rating refuse services as good or better	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Customer satisfaction deviation from 95 percent target	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Environment and Energy</b>						
<b>Supporting Sound Environmental Policy and Practices</b>						
Total tons of sanitary district refuse and recyclables	62,855	60,772	65,000	58,799	70,000	70,000
Did the division meet the mandated recycling rate?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Total County tons recycled	469,888	466,081	465,000	406,387	465,000	465,000
Total County recycling rate <sup>1</sup>	47.80%	47.60%	47.00%	43.90%	47.00%	47.00%
Tons of material delivered to Reworld	731,342	702,175	700,000	727,415	700,000	700,000

<sup>1</sup> To be consistent with the annual recycling rate reported to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VADEQ), which is measured annually based on calendar year (January 1 to December 31) rather than Fairfax County's fiscal year schedule (July 1 to June 30). The recycling rate is reported to VADEQ by April 30 of the subsequent calendar year.

A complete list of performance measures can be viewed at  
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2026-adopted-performance-measures-pm>