

# 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. The Department of Management and Budget continues to integrate the Countywide Strategic Plan into budget documents. For information on how the agency's program performance contributes to these goals, please see the Performance Measurement Results by Community Outcome Area. For more information on the Countywide Strategic Plan, please see [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan/). Solid Waste Management Program primarily supports the following Community Outcome Areas:



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

## Focus

The Solid Waste Management Program (SWMP) is responsible for the management and/or oversight and long-range planning for all refuse collection, recycling, and disposal operations within the County. 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 2024, approximately 25,800 homes are included within these districts. Revenue for Fund 40130 is derived from a levy charged to homeowners within leaf collection districts. The levy for leaf collection remains at \$0.012 per \$100 of assessed real estate value in FY 2024.

Fund 40140, Refuse Collection and Recycling Operations, provides for collection of waste and recycling from approximately 44,380 individual households within Fairfax County's approved sanitary districts. Revenue to support residential collection operations is derived from the refuse collection fee. In FY 2021, as a response to the impact of pandemic, the rate was reduced to \$370 per unit to provide a credit for services for reduced service levels due to COVID-19 in FY 2020. This has weighed on the fund's operations and impacted the fund's capacity to provide sustainable services. The annual collection rate increased to \$400 per home in FY 2022 and to \$475 per home in FY 2023.

# Solid Waste Management Program Overview

In FY 2024, the collection rate is proposed to increase to \$490 per home, to assist SWMP in meeting increased labor, equipment, and contractual costs necessary to operate the collections programs.

The fund also supports collection of waste and recycling from properties owned and occupied by Fairfax County, known as the County Agency Routes (CARs) program. Revenue for this service is collected from County agencies to which the service is provided. In FY 2024, the rate for CARs will increase by \$0.50 from \$6.10 per cubic yard to \$6.60 per cubic yard. Since the fund balances are low, a rate increase will be required to ensure the fees collected are more in line with the expenditures, especially when factoring in the replacement of aged equipment and personnel costs to ensure the sustainability and quality of services provision.

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

- Overall management of solid waste reduction and recycling programs;
- Plans for future recycling programs and waste reduction systems; and
- Ensuring that disposal capacity remains available for wastes by reducing the amount of waste sent for disposal through recycling programs that divert reusable or recyclable items from the waste stream to avoid disposal.

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

Fund 40150, Refuse Disposal, funds operations at the I-66 Transfer Station, which receives refuse collected in northern and western portions of the County, and transports the refuse to Covanta Fairfax, LLC in Lorton, Virginia. When the Covanta facility is unavailable due to maintenance and other operational issues, wastes are transported to the Prince William County landfill or other available landfills outside of Fairfax County. Leaves and grass are transported to compost facilities for processing in Prince William County. Other programs conducted at the Transfer Station include operation of the Household Hazardous Waste program, electronics recycling, used motor oil, antifreeze and cooking oil recycling, latex paint recycling, automotive battery recycling, and scrap metal/appliance recycling. In FY 2022, Fund 40150 moved to a single rate of \$66 per ton for all disposal and eliminated the discounted contractual disposal rate. This action is intended to simplify the rate structure and billing process as part of the conversion to a new billing system which went live April 2021. In FY 2024, the disposal rate will increase from \$70 per ton to \$72 per ton to assist SWMP in meeting increased labor and contractual costs necessary to operate the programs and to provide sustainable services. The SWMP is using the rate stabilization reserve to keep the proposed increase to only \$2 additional per ton.

Fund 40170, I-95 Refuse Disposal, funds the operation of the I-95 Landfill Complex. This location includes the municipal solid waste (MSW) landfill that was designed and constructed by the District of Columbia and operated from 1970 to 1995 until it was closed in December 1995. Since that time, the facility has accepted only ash generated by the combustion of waste. The ash landfill has been constructed in four phases and meets federal and state standards for the construction of new landfills, which require a double liner with a leachate collection system for the prevention of groundwater degradation. These operations are funded by a Refuse Disposal fee, which is \$29.70 per ton in FY 2024 to fund the ash disposal operation. This rate is set in advance by a formal multi-year contract with Covanta. Costs associated with operation and maintenance of environmental control equipment related to the closed portion of the landfill are anticipated to increase in future years. This is attributed to landfill gas collection, groundwater monitoring and remediation,

# Solid Waste Management Program Overview

stormwater management and leachate control. These activities ensure compliance with the facility's state-issued solid waste permit (SWP103) and stormwater permit (VAR051076), and applicable environmental regulations administered by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ).

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

## 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 2024 Fee</b>	\$0.012/\$100 Assessed Property Value	\$490 Curbside	\$72/Ton, System Fee Recycling and Disposal Center	\$29.70/Ton
<b>FY 2023 Fee</b>	\$0.012/\$100 Assessed Property Value	\$475 Curbside	\$70/Ton, System Fee Recycling and Disposal Center	\$28.44/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 (brush, grass, and leaves), tires, and others.

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

## Performance Measurement Results

### Effective and Efficient Government

The program continued to exceed the targeted service quality measure of 95 percent of its customers rating refuse service.

### Environment and Energy

The program exceeded the state-mandated recycling rate of 25 percent by 25.0 percent. The actual number of tons delivered to the Covanta facility was 731,342 tons in FY 2022. The upgraded facility allows for Covanta to have a more efficient way to process waste from SWMP and produce more energy that can be sold to the local utility company.

# Solid Waste Management Program Overview

Indicator	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Estimate	FY 2024 Estimate
<b>Effective and Efficient Government</b>						
<b>Financial Sustainability and Trustworthiness</b>						
Collection Cost per home collected in the sanitary districts	\$418.74	\$414.16	\$438.91	\$426.85	\$445.21	\$470.82
Cost per ton for disposal operations	\$64.57	\$65.16	\$68.02	\$68.51	\$68.11	\$72.53
<b>Customer Satisfaction with County Services</b>						
Percent of customers or citizens rating refuse services as good or better	95.60%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Customer satisfaction deviation from 95 percent target	0.60%	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	67,432	70,652	68,000	62,855	70,000	65,000
Did the division meet the mandated recycling rate?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Total County tons recycled	422,286	466,793	422,286	464,299	460,000	460,000
Total County recycling rate	47.00%	49.60%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%
Ton of material delivered to Covanta	671,008	688,305	650,000	731,342	650,000	650,000

A complete list of performance measures can be viewed at  
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2024-advertised-performance-measures-pm>