

## ***What is the Southern Landfill?***

The Southern Landfill is a Council-owned and -operated landfill located at 201 Landfill Road off Happy Valley Road. The site was opened in 1974 and is currently in the third stage of a multi-stage development. It sits on land specifically set aside in the District Plan for landfilling, with around 100 years of filling space left.

The Southern Landfill is a critical part of the city's public health and sanitation infrastructure, dealing with the city's waste, sewage and disposal of contaminated material (e.g. asbestos) from developments. It also forms part of the city's resilience network, providing an area under the direct control of the Council to dispose of large amounts of demolition waste in case of a possible natural disaster.

Surpluses from the Southern Landfill subsidise recycling collection services, green-waste diversion to produce compost, the Tip Shop and other waste-minimisation activities to the tune of \$6 million dollars per annum. We would need to find other ways to pay for these services if the landfill stopped operating.

Any solution we come up with will include our current waste-diversion initiatives and be flexible enough to do more of these in the future. Currently the Southern Landfill diverts approximately 8,000 tonnes of waste from the landfill each year. This consists of:

- Green waste diverted to compost – approximately 5,800 tonnes a year
- Food waste diverted to compost – approximately 1,600 tonnes per year
- Scrap metal diversion – approximately 575 tonnes each year
- Salvaged material from the transfer station and voluntary drop-offs of material to the Tip Shop for resale – estimated at 250 tonnes per year.

The landfill also funds kerbside recycling and a free recycling drop-off at the Southern Landfill. This diverts approximately 11,500 tonnes of recyclable material from waste each year.

## ***Why do we need to consider more waste management infrastructure like expanding the landfill?***

The existing landfill will be full in approximately four years. Our resource consent for the current stage of the landfill will expire in April 2026. Wellingtonians are invited to join the conversation on how we manage the waste, sewage and contaminated material of our growing city.

## ***Why did you start this process so late? Surely as a Council you knew that the landfill would be at capacity well in advance.***

The Council applied for consent to extend the landfill in 2013. The concept looked at starting filling at the top of Careys Gulley and then landfilling down to meet the existing fill site. This committed the whole valley to landfilling. The consent application was publicly notified and received submissions opposing the approach. We then placed the consent application on hold.

We were optimistic that legislative changes, the economics and technological advancements allowing alternatives to landfilling to be viable in New Zealand would take place before we reached the deadline to make a decision on this.

## ***Surely there are other alternatives to managing waste than landfilling? Let's try something else.***

We have always kept an open mind on alternatives to landfilling by keeping up to date with emerging and existing technology and trends in waste-management solutions in New Zealand.

All current alternatives still produce some form of waste, albeit in smaller quantities but with higher concentrations of pollutants that ultimately require landfilling.

Currently we think that technological limits, the legislative environment, public attitudes to waste and commercial realities make it too risky to apply any landfilling alternatives in New Zealand. We believe that alternatives are probably still a decade away and that landfilling is still the most appropriate option for now.

We need to test this assumption with a robust assessment of the viability of other alternative waste-disposal options. The alternatives include closing the landfill, building a waste-to-energy plant or using biological processes.

All options will be tested by scoring against a set of concerns/values. We will be engaging the community to understand which concerns/values are most important. The results of this assessment will allow us to check if we are going down the right path.

Looking forward, we believe that things will change and landfilling will no longer be the most appropriate option in the future. It is unfortunate that our consent expires at the cusp of a change in the way we think about waste; we believe that if landfilling is still the most viable solution, it will only be an interim step towards a future without landfills.

***The Council has declared a climate emergency as well as a goal to be a zero carbon city by 2050, and is supposed to minimise waste under the Regional Waste Minimisation Plan. This appears counterproductive.***

Nationwide, waste produces approximately 5% of New Zealand's carbon emissions. In 2016, 89% of carbon emissions came from agriculture, energy production and transport.

From a waste point of view, we will need to change how we live, how we behave as consumers and how we view and treat the waste we produce to achieve our ambitions as a city.

This will take a concerted effort by all, requiring time to implement incremental steps to get there. While these changes take place, it is prudent to still have the waste-management and sanitary infrastructure necessary to keep the city resilient and its residents healthy.

#### ***How long will this project take?***

We need a solution for our waste management up and running by the end of 2023 at the latest. Ideally we want resource consents applied for by April/May 2020 and a decision on our proposal within three to 12 months of lodging the consent applications. This gives us a window of three years to complete the necessary infrastructure for the proposed solution.

#### ***How much will this cost?***

We have set aside \$16 million under the Long Term Plan to consent and construct the proposed waste management infrastructure.

#### ***Where is the money coming from?***

The funds to construct the necessary infrastructure will be borrowed, with the payments covered by future waste-disposal fees.

#### ***Will there be significant disruption to the area due to this project?***

We anticipate very minor disruption. Most of the work would likely occur at the Southern Landfill well away from residential properties.

#### ***Will the local residents be affected in any way – noise, smell, traffic?***

We do not expect any major increase in traffic volumes during the construction phase, as any material excavated for the construction of the proposed solution will not be transported out of the area.

We are conscious that the community has concerns about the number of large trucks that visit our facility and will do our very best to minimise any additional traffic movements to the site during the construction phase of the preferred solution.

The intention is not to generate any more traffic. We want to be flexible enough to accommodate any waste-minimisation initiatives that become viable that ultimately could reduce the amount of waste disposed of at our facility, and therefore the number of vehicles.

***How will the natural environment be protected during the development?***

Protecting the environment is a priority for us. All work will be done within the constraints of the Resource Management Act and any consent requirements. More specific details on how this will be achieved will be supplied once we know what the proposed solution looks like.

***Will it be future proofed?***

Any solution proposed will be flexible and robust enough to accommodate future changes to the volumes, types and amounts of waste received, or complement alternative waste-disposal technology.

***How can I get involved?***

You are welcome to join the conversation on the proposed extension of the landfill. You can find out more at [Wellington.govt.nz/southernlandfillproject](https://Wellington.govt.nz/southernlandfillproject), sign up for updates by emailing us at [Landfill@wcc.govt.nz](mailto:Landfill@wcc.govt.nz) or call us on 499 4444.