



**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF NORTHVILLE  
RESOLUTION 2016-088**

**WASHTENAW COUNTY SOLID WASTE PLANNING COMMISSION  
Position of Northville Township Concerning  
The Arbor Hills Landfill and proposed New Facility Siting**

At a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Charter Township of Northville, held on Thursday, August 18, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at the Northville Township Hall, the following information was offered:

**1. New Facility Siting Process:** The Advanced Disposal facility “expansion” request on non-contiguous property north of Six Mile Road is not an expansion of an existing facility, but rather a request for a New Facility that must go through the full Siting Process. Within the Siting Process, Advanced Disposal must address, among other things, a demonstration of deeded or titled ownership, leachate management and wetland mitigation. The proposed “expansion” property north of Six Mile is not contiguous to the existing Arbor Hills permitted footprint, and therefore cannot be considered an expansion without the vacation of the Six Mile right-of-way.

The following paragraphs detail why there is sufficient disposal capacity at both the current Arbor Hills Landfill and existing landfills in Wayne County to meet the statutory planning needs for the management of Washtenaw County Solid wastes for the next 10 years.

**2. Background:** The Arbor Hills landfill was started in 1970 by Holloway Sand and Gravel. In the mid-1980s, the site was sold to Browning Ferris Industries, Inc. (BFI), which continued operating the existing facility (Arbor Hills East) and also began construction on a new, 336-acre landfill (Arbor Hills West). At the time, there were approximately 80 homes in Northville Township within 2 miles of the site. The landfill changed hands multiple times after BFI sold the site in April of 2000. In 2009, the then-current owner (Veolia) requested an above-ground expansion to Arbor Hills West, promising there would be no further expansion of the site. Washtenaw County granted that request, allowing the landfill to reach a height of up to 500 feet above ground. At the time, there were 2,100 homes in Northville Township within 2 miles of the site.

Advanced Disposal bought the Arbor Hills site from Veolia in November of 2013. Fifteen months later, in February of 2015, Advanced asked that Washtenaw County modify its current Solid Waste Management Plan to allow for a new landfill north of Six Mile Road. This was done despite the documented capacity of Arbor Hills Landfill to meet the disposal needs of wastes generated within Washtenaw County. At the time of this request, there were thousands of homes in Northville Township within 2 miles of the existing site. This area also includes a Township Nature Center, 100 community gardens, numerous wetlands, Maybury State Park, and an elementary school. The Steeplechase neighborhood sits only 1,100 feet away from the eastern edge of the proposed new landfill.

**3. Purpose:** The main purpose of the County's Solid Waste Management Plan is to ensure that Washtenaw has adequate disposal capacity for any waste generated within the county. Protection of the public health and setting goals for waste prevention and recycling are recognized as important objectives as well. Historically, Washtenaw County has followed an integrated strategy in managing its solid waste stream, one that places waste prevention, reduction, recycling and composting at the top of the solid waste management hierarchy. Landfilling was to be de-emphasized as a waste management strategy, with landfill space to be utilized only to dispose of any solid waste remaining after various diversion strategies were developed to their fullest potential.

As recognized by the current Plan, Washtenaw County's solid waste management strategy "need[s] to be developed and implemented with due regard for both local conditions and the state and federal regulatory framework for protecting public health and the quality of the air, water and land." The Goals and Objectives of the Plan include "prevent[ing] adverse effects on the public health and the environment....so as to protect the quality of the air, land and ground surface waters."

**4. Capacity:** 40% of the waste generated by Washtenaw County was disposed of at Arbor Hills.<sup>1</sup> Notably, however, that amount represents only 10% of the total volume of waste accepted by Arbor Hills last year. Arbor Hills has reported over 23 million cubic yards of remaining capacity at its present site. Based on current disposal rates, it has an estimated 13 years of capacity remaining from all sources. With respect to waste generated by Washtenaw County alone, Arbor Hills has demonstrated disposal capacity well beyond the next 10 years.

**5. Impacts:** Concerns have been expressed that Northville residents should not have moved next to an existing landfill. Over the years, Northville Township expanded toward its border with Salem Township based upon the promise that there would be no further expansion of Arbor Hills, or the siting of new landfills in this area. The neighborhoods at issue were developed during the past 2 decades in reliance on the existing Arbor Hills landfill having a finite duration. Neither Northville Township nor its residents could control the fact that Washtenaw County permitted the landfill to expand above ground, adding 17 years to its capacity, in 2009. Similarly, no one could have anticipated that Advanced Disposal would seek approval for a new facility on property north of Six Mile. Had Northville Township known that there would be a proposal for a second landfill at some point in the future; other decisions would have been made for the development of this area. Going forward, the presence of a second landfill means this area will not likely be developed further in the future, resulting in the loss of needed tax revenue.

Siting a new landfill on acreage north of Six Mile Road would adversely impact our community without any consent, evaluation of impacts, or host agreement with Northville Township.<sup>2</sup> Residents in Northville Township (as well as Salem Township residents along Napier Road, Seven Mile Road, and Chubb Road) would face a number of difficult consequences, including increased exposure to gas emissions from an additional facility; a heavier volume of waste transportation vehicles moving along surrounding roads; and a reduction in both quality of life and property values.

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<sup>1</sup> Of the remaining amount, 56% of Washtenaw County's waste was disposed of at the Woodland Meadows landfill in Wayne County.

<sup>2</sup> Note that the SWPC is required to include "2 people from any municipality located within (3) miles of the active work area of the proposed site..." But there are also thousands of homes in Wayne County within 2 miles of the proposed new landfill (as indicated above), much less 3 miles. It is neither reasonable, nor fair, that these neighborhoods have no say in the process.

**6. Risks:** Washtenaw County has long been viewed as progressive in regards to environmental matters. Citizens within both Salem and Northville Townships—and throughout the State of Michigan—expect a certain level of environmental improvement from their communities. Landfilling is inconsistent with the County’s past emphasis on waste reduction and recovery. Moreover, it is not environmentally sound. As recognized by the County’s current Solid Waste Management Plan, reliance on landfilling increases the occurrence of adverse human and environmental health effects.<sup>3</sup> Once the new site is designated as a landfill, the value of property in Northville Township may be lowered in the absence of some form of a Property Value Assurance Agreement between Advanced Disposal and Northville Township. Additionally, options for future use of the landfill property north of Six Mile would be limited.

The siting of a new landfill to the north of Arbor Hills creates long-term risks for both Salem and Northville Township. Having two landfills in this area doubles the potential for environmental problems 30 to 40 years in the future. In addition, long-term monitoring of the existing Arbor Hills site is already required of Advanced Disposal after the facility is closed. The financial burden—and scope of such monitoring upon Advanced Disposal will increase if a New Facility is constructed north of Six Mile, requiring separate closure and post closure commitments.

**7. Options:** Wayne County’s Solid Waste Management Plan explicitly recognizes an import allowance of 2 million cubic yards per year from Washtenaw County. The export of solid waste to licensed disposal facilities in Wayne County is similarly authorized in Washtenaw’s existing Plan. Of the 1.4 million cubic yards of waste generated by Washtenaw County in 2015, only 752,000 cubic yards were disposed of in Wayne County landfills. There is capacity for a significant, additional portion of Washtenaw County’s waste stream to be disposed of in Wayne County.<sup>4</sup> Washtenaw County has an existing contract with Wayne County that allows it to take advantage of this capacity.

Overall, the remaining cumulative capacity at all 4 active Wayne County landfills is more than 89 million cubic yards. The total regional landfill capacity for municipal solid waste (across Ingham, Jackson, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne Counties) is currently more than 149 million cubic yards. An abundance of available landfill space exists across Southeast Michigan to handle the waste generated by Washtenaw County for the foreseeable future.

With no increased diversion, waste generation for Washtenaw County is projected to remain relatively stagnant through 2030. However, Washtenaw has already established significant infrastructure to support waste prevention, reduction, recycling and composting. The County’s current solid waste management plan includes numerous efforts to promote reuse, reduction and recycling. If those efforts result in even a 10% increase in the diversion rate, the need for landfill capacity would be *reduced* in the next five years, and dramatically lessened overall. This, in turn, would diminish the need to utilize existing landfill space to dispose of solid waste (much less the proposed New Facility capacity).

Finally, as noted above, the majority of Washtenaw County’s municipal solid waste is not being disposed of at Arbor Hills. The Agreement with Advanced Disposal provides for disposal of all waste generated within Washtenaw County’s borders at the existing facility. Arbor Hills reportedly has 13 years of remaining capacity at its present site. Expanding the portion of the County’s waste stream that is delivered to Arbor Hills would

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<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., the current Washtenaw County Solid Waste Management Plan at Appendix B, page B-5 (“There is strong evidence that landfill leachate contains harmful substances that affect humans and the environment through surface and groundwater contamination” and “The increased volume and complexity of the solid waste stream has led to environmental hazards and a threat to public health, reducing public acceptance of this disposal option”)

<sup>4</sup> Based on 2015 facility reports, Carleton Farms has 62.9 years of capacity remaining. Woodland Meadows reports 11 years, Riverview Land Preserve has 13.4 years, and Sauk Trail Hills has 16.2 years. Taken together, these existing landfill sites in Wayne County have over 103 years of remaining capacity.

allow the County to better manage its solid waste needs by utilizing its existing disposal sites without the need for a New Facility.

**8. Conclusion:** The purpose of the Washtenaw County Solid Waste Management Plan is to determine whether this group of communities has adequate disposal capacity for its solid waste over the next 10 years. Evidence presented to this Committee shows that the County has already met that goal. Washtenaw County generated 1.4 million cubic yards of solid waste last year. Not only does the existing Arbor Hills landfill have capacity to dispose of more waste from Washtenaw County than it currently receives, but the County also has existing contracts with Wayne County for disposal of 2 million additional cubic yards of waste annually. Simply put, there is sufficient capacity within Washtenaw County at this time, and arrangements for alternate disposal options are in effect. There is no need to approve the siting of a new landfill to meet the planning needs for management of Washtenaw County solid waste.

When a community places a landfill within two miles of a bordering County, there is a fundamental unfairness at play. Northville Township cannot participate in the planning process. Yet Northville Township and its residents will experience all the adverse consequences of living near a second landfill. The Trustees of Northville Township urge this Committee not to let financial considerations affect its obligations under the statute. Rather, the Trustees ask the Committee members to follow the purpose of the Plan, and not allow economics to dictate further adverse impacts to the residents of Northville Township.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:** Upon a motion by Treasurer Banner and a second of Trustee Shadko, to approve Resolution 2016-088 outlining Northville Township’s position concerning the Arbor Hills landfill and the proposed new facility siting.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Township Clerk will sign and then forward the Resolution to the members of the Washtenaw County Solid Waste Planning Commission.

**AYES:** Hillebrand, Banner, Gans, Heath, Shadko  
**NAYS:** None  
**ABSENT:** Nix, Herrmann

**RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED:**

I, Sue A. Hillebrand, Clerk of the Charter Township of Northville, County of Wayne, State of Michigan, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution of action approved by the Board of Trustees at their regular meeting held on August 18, 2016 at 44405 Six Mile Road, Northville, Michigan 48168.



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Sue A. Hillebrand, Clerk  
Charter Township of Northville