

Dallas Local Solid Waste Management Plan (LSWMP) Update Public Meeting Q&A

The following provides a summary of the questions and responses from the public meeting held March 31, 2022.

Q. Does the level of influence graphic in the Executive Summary showing sectors represent the actual ratio between sectors?

The Control of Material by Sector shows a graphic representing the control of material by sector where the size of the circles represents the general volume of material generated by each sector, but it is not presented to scale. Generally, the volume of material generated by the commercial sector is larger than the multi-family sector which is larger than the single-family sector but the size of the circles do not correspond to estimated tonnages due to data limitations of refuse/recycling material generated by the multi-family and commercial sectors.

Q. Why is plastic, glass, and metal waste not specified in any of the draft goals?

The single-family goals specify organic waste, paper waste and reduction in waste landfilled to align with the goals adopted by the City's Comprehensive Environmental and Climate Action Plan (CECAP). The approach identified as part of the Implementation & Funding Plan to achieving these goals is to increase the capture rate of all recyclable materials in the single-stream program including plastic, glass and metals.

Q. Is plastic the worst offender in the landfill?

The composition of material based on the most recent regional waste characterization indicates that about 15 percent of material landfilled from the single-family sector is plastic. Since plastics do not degrade and emit methane like other organic materials, from a greenhouse gas perspective, organic materials (e.g., food waste, yard trimmings) generate more emissions than plastics. However, plastics are some of the most valuable recyclable material and the lost value when these materials are disposed become significant given the volume of material disposed annually.

Q. What percentage of alleys don't provide sufficient clearance to safely operate collection vehicles and where are most of the inaccessible alleys located where the City would like to eliminate service?

The collection program services about 45 percent of customers from alley set outs. It is unclear exactly what percentage of the alleys have overhanging wires, tree limbs, or insufficient width to reliably provide safe and efficient service since the accessibility of individual alleys is subject to change over time (e.g., seasonality, utility box adjustments, wear and tear over time, etc.)

Q. Does the City contract with an out-of-state firm for collection? I'm concerned about workplace safety for garbage truck crews.

The City collects residential refuse, recycling and brush & bulky items from single-family customers. Commercial entities and multi-tenant complexes contract with non-exclusive franchisees that are allowed to operate in the City. There are no out of state firms operating as collection service providers in the City for typical collection, but contractors may be hired to support collection of surges of brush and bulky items related to storms.

Q. How dependent is the recycling program on the value of recycling materials?

Recycling collected is processed at the FCC Materials Recovery Facility, and the City receives a revenue share of the materials sold; however, the recycling program is not dependent on the value of recycling materials (e.g., if recycling commodities markets decrease in value, it will not impact the City's ability to deploy crews to collect recycling and have it processed for sale. In fact, if the values of materials decrease, the City is not required to pay a recycling processing fee based on the terms of the agreement at the FCC Materials Recovery Facility).

Q. Does the City own and operate its trash collection fleet/vehicles?

The City's collection crews are staffed by City employees and some temporary laborers. The collection equipment is owned by the City, as well.

Q. What are the working available hours for the HCCC, and if we go when it is closed can the County staff turn us away?

The Dallas County Household Chemical Collection Center (HCCC) is open to receive material on Tuesday from 9:00 am - 7:30 pm, Wednesday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm, Thursday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm and the second and fourth Saturdays of each month from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. The days when the HCCC is closed to receiving material (e.g., Monday, Friday, and every other Saturday) are when operators are packaging materials and coordinating with contractors to collect them for transportation to recycling or disposal. Given the space constraints at the HCCC, the entire facility is required to safely and efficiently package and ship out materials and there is no capacity to receive customers during those times.

Q. Will there be separation of brush/yard waste at the transfer station or landfill?

To achieve the goals proposed as part of the LSWMP Update the City must separately collect brush and bulky items so the brush and yard trimmings can be separately processed.

Q. Are there plans to build new transfer stations to accommodate additional waste streams? If so, will their placement be spread where needed rather than areas with lower incomes?

As part of the Implementation & Funding plan, the City will improve the transfer stations to maintain the high level of service provided to residents (e.g., residential drop-offs), maximize the existing capacity and seek to expand Bachman to accommodate multiple material streams including refuse, recycling, yard trimmings/brush and bulky items. If the City determines that relocating or constructing a new facility is necessary to achieve the LSWMP Update goals and objectives, there will be a dedicated stakeholder engagement process to determine the most equitable location for such a facility.

Q. Will existing transfer stations need to be closed for residential drop-offs while updates are being made? If so, how will the City compensate for this, (e.g., special or free collections by resident requests or expanding Code Compliance community cleanups?)

The City will explore construction phasing plans to maintain the continuity of service with any future expansion projects. If current services for residents are temporarily suspended, the City will identify alternative approaches to provide customers an outlet to self-haul material during that time.

Q. What has been the response/feedback from the building owners and managers association on strategies outlined for commercial recycling and possible future organics diversion? Has data been requested from them or shared by them about current diversion efforts voluntarily being undertaken by their member businesses?

As part of the stakeholder engagement process, the City met with the Apartment Association of Greater Dallas (AAGD) and the Chamber of Commerce to discuss potential strategies for increasing commercial recycling. The response communicated by these groups indicated that commercial entities are interested in recycling and supporting their business to divert from disposal if it supports the financial (e.g., does not result in a significant cost increase for collection service) and operational (e.g., does not place a significant burden on staff or require major capital improvements) needs of the business.

Q. In regard to the commercial sector, how would the City verify data from non-exclusive franchise hauler?

As part of the Implementation & Funding plan, the City will devote resources to increasing compliance with non-exclusive franchise haulers to ensure high levels of compliance and are able to verify responses. The City has confidence that its non-exclusive franchise will provide truthful responses to the best of their ability. The City will work with haulers to identify any data gaps or oversights in reported volumes.

Q. Do you have sufficient funding for staff needed to enact the measures CECAP outlines?

The City recently devoted three FTEs to the Sanitation Department to increase education, outreach and compliance efforts, as well as an additional ten FTEs to managing compliance efforts focused directly on Sanitation Department services. As part of the Implementation & Funding plan, the City will leverage cross departmental efforts among Sanitation Department, the Office of Environmental Quality and Sustainability, and Code Compliance to devote sufficient resources (e.g., staff and equipment) to implement the programs required to meet the goals adopted by the LSWMP Update.

Q. I've heard the MRF does not support all types of recyclable plastics. Is there a way to make this information more transparent to the residents?

City staff and FCC conduct MRF audits on a twice per year basis as part of a contract provision in the operating agreement. The FCC MRF is a state of the art facility that is able to segregate plastic containers (e.g. water and soda bottles, milk and detergent jugs and some single-use containers) and rigid plastic utilizing equipment and operating practices that are in line with or better than industry standard facilities. Although there are times the MRF struggles to sell certain materials due to market conditions, the facility is technically and operationally capable of separating all saleable plastic commodities. FCC typically is able to sell plastic materials at values that exceed the published index values for these materials.