



# Solid Waste

## Policy Discussion Guide

Mid-America Regional Council Solid Waste Management District

### Overview

Landfill space and protection of natural resources are critical issues facing the Kansas City area over the next 10 years, as two area landfills are anticipated to close. Capacity will then fall sharply with the expected closure of the Johnson County Landfill by 2027. This landfill receives the majority of the region's municipal solid waste.

Communities in Kansas and Missouri must work together to avert a landfill capacity crisis and to ensure that adequate waste management services remain available to everyone in the metropolitan region. The generation and disposal of waste, opportunities to recover and reuse waste, and improper waste disposal not only impact public health, but also quality of life in the entire region.

Consistent policies, planning principles and practices need to guide the region's solid waste management decisions.

### Policy Questions

The MARC Solid Waste Management District (SWMD) recently commissioned a solid waste status report to guide future solid waste planning and decision making and to lay the foundation for regionally integrated solid waste management plans in Kansas and Missouri. To move the region forward, the report recommended four focus areas:

#### Regional Cooperation: work together as a region on solid waste issues

**1** Private sector businesses provide most of the waste disposal and diversion services in the Kansas City area. How can local governments best support cost-effective and convenient waste disposal and diversion services for all residents and businesses?

#### Landfill Capacity: new disposal facilities will be needed in the very near future

**2** The Kansas City region is currently served by four municipal solid waste landfills — three privately owned and one municipally owned. How can the region best evaluate the expected life of those landfills and develop plans, policies and programs to meet the future demand for landfill space?

#### Waste Diversion and Minimization: increase the amount of waste recovered for reuse, recycling and composting

**3** Most of the region's waste diversion occurs in the commercial sector with paper as the primary recyclable commodity (excluding scrap metal salvage operations). Significant progress could occur in industry, and in construction and demolition (C&D) sectors. How can the region support and expand viable markets for other waste streams? What strategic decisions might help expand local diversion infrastructure?

#### Local Government Action: advance programs and policies to promote the sound recovery and disposal of solid waste

**4** Various local governments have supported effective diversion programs; however, solid waste generation and disposal continues to increase in the region. How can local governments stimulate additional waste reduction and diversion and support best management practices?



Funded in part by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Re•think Re•do Re•new



# 1 The Need for Regional Action

Local government solid waste management policies and practices developed and carried out in a regional context help to reduce duplication of effort and minimize costs. Solid waste flows freely across city, county and state boundaries. Many individual communities are not in a position to host a landfill or manage a recycling center. Communities depend on regional facilities and cooperative arrangements to meet their solid waste needs in a cost-effective manner.

Despite the regional nature of today's solid waste management infrastructure, regional planning has lagged behind. Under Missouri law, the MARC SWMD is responsible for planning to meet the solid waste needs of Cass, Clay, Jackson, Platte and Ray counties in Missouri. Under Kansas law, Johnson, Leavenworth and Wyandotte counties in Kansas are individually responsible for meeting their respective county solid waste needs.

To address future challenges, these organizations must strengthen their efforts to identify common solid waste management solutions that benefit all communities.

Regional solid waste issues that are ripe for community discussion include:

**93%** of the region's residents think it is very important (66%) or somewhat important (27%) to recycle.

- How can the region provide for adequate and affordable disposal capacity as local landfills close?
- What strategies will increase waste diversion, without increasing illegal dumping?
- What is the public sector's role in management of trash collection for disposal and diversion, which has primarily been a private sector responsibility in the region?
- Are there better ways to pay for local/regional planning and waste diversion activities other than the current system of state landfill surcharges?

The MARC SWMD, together with Johnson, Leavenworth and Wyandotte counties, will initiate a dialogue with local officials, businesses and the public at large about solid waste management strategies to effectively plan for the solid waste challenges of the future.

## ACTION STEPS

### Planning

Outline a planning process with cities and counties on both sides of the state line to achieve consistent plans and reliable data.

### Policies

Collaborate on common goals and explore funding and organizational strategies.

### Programs

Coordinate discussion among local officials and key stakeholders on regional solid waste planning and policy issues.

# 2 Landfill capacity c

Landfill capacity within the region is expected to steadily decline in the next 10 years. The private sector drives decisions to locate landfills and transfer stations but not without state and local government input and authorization. Permitting a new landfill is an arduous process and can take up to 10 years or more. The region must begin planning today to minimize disposal costs associated with selecting sites for new landfills and/or transferring waste outside the region.

Of the four municipal solid waste (MSW) landfills, the majority of the region's waste is disposed in the two Kansas landfills. Since MSW landfills are expensive to build due to stringent federal and state requirements, the region should seek ways to conserve landfill capacity through integrated diversion measures. Well-located construction and demolition (C&D) disposal and processing facilities could provide a safe and less costly alternative for this portion of the region's waste.

Local governments need to balance economic, social and environmental implications that disposal and processing facilities bring

### Regional Landfill Life Spans

#### MISSOURI

Lee's Summit	2014
Courtney Ridge	2026
*Show Me Regional	2043
*St. Joseph	2028

#### KANSAS

Forest View	2009
*Hamm	2141
Johnson County	2027

*\*out of MARC Region*

## continues to decline

to their communities. Good data and knowledge about sound solid waste disposal practices can provide the foundation for informed decision making and help alleviate public concern.

The MARC SWMD and Johnson, Leavenworth and Wyandotte counties will engage the public and private sectors to plan for adequate and affordable waste disposal as part of a sustainable integrated solid waste management system.

### ACTION STEPS

#### Planning

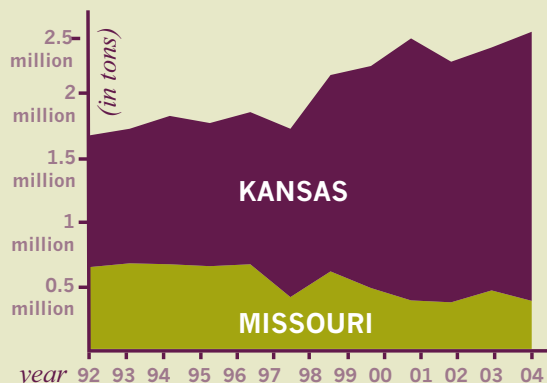
Monitor waste disposal and diversion data, trends and technologies to inform local decision makers.

#### Policies

Manage solid waste through integrated systems designed to minimize and divert waste from landfills.

#### Programs

Promote innovative and reliable practices to reduce waste.



Landfill Disposal Trends (MARC region only)

## 3 Not enough waste is recovered or reused

The Kansas City region's diversion of solid waste for recycling is below the national average. Our recycling rate for the municipal solid waste stream (residential, commercial, institutional wastes) was estimated at 19 percent in 2002. The national average exceeds 25 percent. These rates are expected to increase with the addition of the Kansas City, Missouri, curbside recycling program.

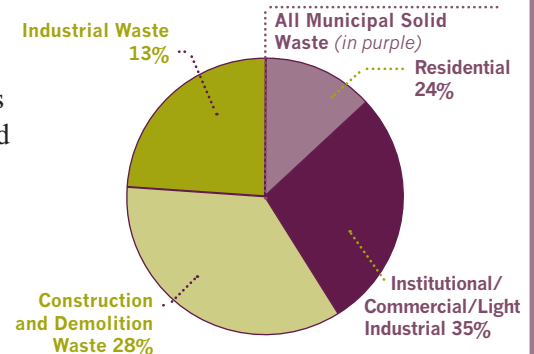
The region's diversion techniques include reuse, recycling, composting, and market development for recovered materials. Major diversion facilities located in Missouri and Kansas accept a wide range of materials, including paper and paperboard, plastics, glass, metals, wood, building materials, textiles, yard waste, tires, appliances, and, most recently, large-volume food waste.

Technological advances undertaken in the private sector have improved the cost effectiveness of residential curbside recycling programs. Single stream collection and processing diverts a wider range of materials, particularly paper, and eliminates the need for special vehicles and manual sorting at the curb. Unlimited curbside recycling combined with a volume-based approach to trash collection result in improved collection and processing, greater recycling volumes and reduced disposal costs, often at a cost savings to residents.

A largely untapped potential for diversion lies with industrial and commercial wastes and construction and demolition debris.

Education can create demand for recovered materials and in return create jobs throughout the region.

#### Where does the waste come from?



(Source: Franklin and Associates, a Division of ERG)

The MARC SWMD and Johnson, Leavenworth and Wyandotte counties will work to strengthen the infrastructure for waste reduction, reuse, recycling and composting to build and expand a robust economy for recovered materials.

### ACTION STEPS

#### Planning

Increase knowledge about waste as resources — "Think Waste as Resource."

#### Policies

Strengthen the waste diversion infrastructure for reuse, recycling and composting.

#### Programs

Expand the recovery of high-volume materials and promote educational programs.



For more about the MARC Solid Waste Management District, call 816/474-4240 or go to [www.marc.org/swmd](http://www.marc.org/swmd)

# 4 The need for local government participation



Local action is essential for cost-effective solid waste management. Local governments should explore ways to provide oversight of solid waste management with the ultimate goal of more diversion and less dependence on disposal facilities. Good solid waste management depends on adequate funding, integrated waste disposal and diversion options, and participation.

The commitment and leadership of local officials are needed to set policies which strengthen planning and programs. Faced with budget cuts, staffing shortages and multiple demands, local governments must devote scarce resources to the highest priorities. Proactive government policies, programs, and practices must be stimulated to ensure residents and businesses have access to affordable waste and recycling services. An integrated system

that combines waste reduction, reuse, recycling, composting and education with affordable disposal options helps ensure a high quality of life.

**85%** of the region's residents are either very willing (65%) or somewhat willing (20%) to recycle using special curbside bins.



The MARC SWMD and Johnson, Leavenworth and Wyandotte counties will work with local governments to advance proactive policies, programs and participation that support cost-effective waste diversion and disposal practices.

## ACTION STEPS

### Planning

Assess community needs and develop integrated solid waste management plans that support education, waste reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, and safe disposal practices.

### Policies

Establish sustainable strategies to reduce and manage waste.

### Programs

Implement cost-effective services, share program successes, and engage the public to promote solid waste issues and expand services.

## ACTION STEPS AT A GLANCE

	Planning	Policies	Programs
<b>Regional Cooperation</b>	Outline a planning process with cities and counties on both sides of the state line to achieve consistent plans and reliable data.	Collaborate on common goals and explore funding and organizational strategies.	Coordinate discussion among local officials and key stakeholders on regional solid waste planning and policy issues.
<b>Landfill Capacity</b>	Monitor waste disposal and diversion data, trends and technologies to inform local decision makers.	Manage solid waste through integrated systems designed to minimize and divert waste from landfills.	Promote innovative and reliable practices to reduce waste.
<b>Waste Diversion and Minimization</b>	Increase knowledge about waste as resources — “Think Waste as Resource.”	Strengthen the waste diversion infrastructure for reuse, recycling and composting.	Expand the recovery of high-volume materials and promote educational programs.
<b>Local Government Action</b>	Assess community needs and develop integrated solid waste management plans that support education, waste reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, and safe disposal practices.	Establish sustainable strategies to reduce and manage waste.	Implement cost-effective services, share program successes, and engage the public to promote solid waste issues and expand services.

