

Solid Waste Advisory Committee Priorities

As per Madison General Ordinance 33.23, here's what should be the focus of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee:

The Solid Waste Advisory Committee shall act in an advisory capacity to the Mayor and Common Council, making studies and recommendations relative to collection and disposal of refuse, composting, recycling, landfills and other solid waste issues. The Committee shall review City programs and operations and staff reports on these matters, and shall report to the Board of Public Works.

Below is a list of priorities of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee as submitted by committee members:

Overall goal: Reduce solid waste going to landfills and continue to improve the environmental, health, and safety impacts of landfills

1. Recommendations to reduce the waste going into landfills:

- Reduce use of plastic bags and straws by encouraging businesses and residents to use reusable bags and straws
- Encourage residents to rinse and reuse plastic containers
- Encourage residents to donate items that they no longer need
- Support food scrap composting programs and provide information on how to compost at home
- Collect food scraps and compost at biodigester facility
- Discourage use of individual packets of condiments, plastic tableware, etc. at restaurants
- Discourage the use of plastic water bottles
- Consider a pay-as-you-throw program for residents, by charging residents by the amount of MSW (Municipal Solid Waste) they generate.
- Consider deposit laws that encourage the return of empty beverage containers
- Encourage homeowners to mulch their leaves into the soil.
- Investigate methods to generate energy from biogenic waste.
- Consider adopting the USDA and EPA "Winning on Reducing Food Waste" initiative

2. Recycling program concerns and goals:

- Provide a budget to develop stickers/refrigerator magnets for Madison residents as a reminder of what to recycle to foster increased recycling.
- Provide staff and a budget to mount an information campaign on how and what to recycle (social media, flyers, school programs, etc.) to improve the waste stream going to the recycling facility
- Provide information on how to recycle specialty items such as holiday lights, small appliances, etc.
- Re-evaluate program costs and revenue source
- Expanding drop-off site options to include new materials

3. Leaf management concerns and goals

- Continue to offer classes on composting in conjunction with area colleges and increase advertising of these classes
- Provide flyers and social media information on how to compost
- Have mulch and compost give away programs
- Evaluate leaf collection program costs
- Consider a program to incentivize on-site leaf management (composting)

4. Recommendation to consider alternatives to disposing of MSW in the Dane County landfill:

- Biodigesters
- Waste to energy alternatives
- Recycling of electronics and small appliances
- Reuse Improve hazardous waste collection and disposal
- Have a food scrap drop-off program, or other small-scale drop-off program

5. Recommendation to improve hazardous waste management to improve MSW streams going to the Dane County landfill:

- Provide collection kits/containers for hazardous waste (e.g. batteries, used oil) with quarterly pick-up schedules
- Provide resources to educate residents and make it easy to properly dispose of hazardous wastes

6. General landfill concerns:

- Disposing of municipal solid waste (MSW) in landfills is costly, and reducing MSW diverted to landfills is expected to save the City of Madison and our taxpayers money in the costs of the tipping fees per ton charged to dispose of MSW in the Dane County landfill.
- Emissions of leachate and gases are issues for the environment and public health and safety, and reductions in landfill wastes are expected to have positive socio-economic and health benefits.
 - Leachate from landfills can migrate to groundwater and surface water from leaky liners, negatively impacting drinking water, lakes and streams.
- Landfills can have a significant negative impact on climate change, contributing to about 20% of the overall global methane emissions and emitting significant amounts of carbon dioxide when emissions are not captured.
 - Both methane and carbon dioxide are greenhouse gases and contribute to climate change.
 - Toxic gases such as VOC's (volatile organic compounds) are also emitted from landfills, and reducing these will have overall health benefits.
- Landfill construction can lead to loss of habitat for endangered species.
- Nuisances such as insects, rodents, wind-blown litter, dust, smoke, and noise can also be associated with landfills and result in a decrease in the quality of life for nearby residents.