9 Solid Waste Management

Overview: Solid waste management is a topic that affects daily life and community functioning. The Transfer Station at 83 Baptist Road that serves the town is situated on over 6 acres of land that once served as a landfill and currently accepts a wide range of recyclables. The station is open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 4:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. and on Saturdays 8:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.

Elements:

- Solid Waste Disposal; New Hampshire & Canterbury
- Current Status, Challenges, & Future Recommendations

Survey and Results

In 2024, the Solid Waste Committee conducted a town-wide survey. Surveys were mailed to every residence in town. Residents were asked to fill out and deliver responses to drop boxes at the Transfer Station, Elkins Library, or via mail to the Town Office. A link was also provided for input online. A total of 367 responses were collected.

Of the respondents:

- 85.5% utilize the Transfer Station to dispose of their trash, as opposed to utilizing a dumpster or private company for pick up.
- Over 90% sort their recycling and almost 58% compost their own food scraps at home.
- 63% would be in favor of exploring the possibility of a potential alternative site.

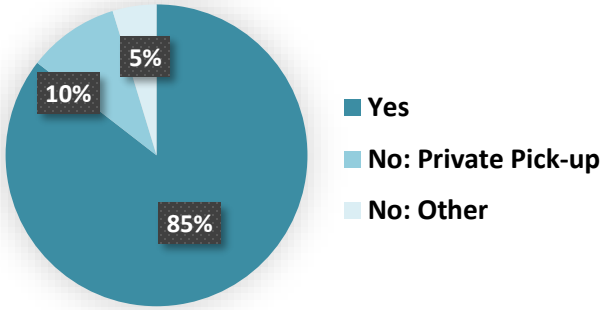
THE TOWN'S THOUGHTS

Canterbury has a long history of environmental stewardship. Constituents have spoken in favor of recycling even when there may be negative financial impact.

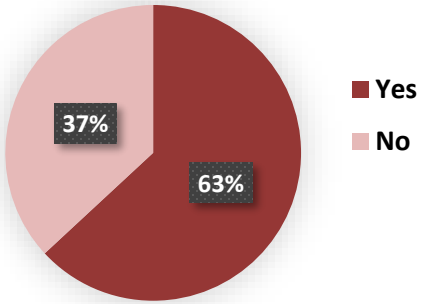
Canterbury Transfer Station

FROM THE SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE'S SURVEY
367 responses received

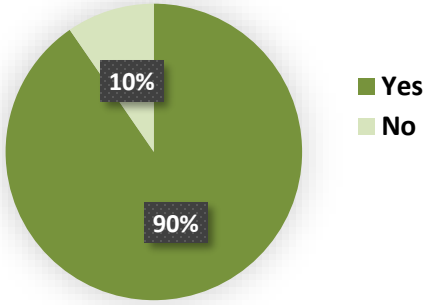
Do you use the Transfer Station to dispose of your household trash?



Would you be in favor of exploring potential alternative Transfer Station sites?



Do you currently separate recyclable materials at home?



Canterbury Solid Waste Disposal

The Transfer Station sits atop a closed and temporarily capped Landfill. The landfill ceased to operate in the mid-1980's. Required water monitoring by the State is ongoing to ensure protection of human health and the environment. The site is now one of 174 NHDES permitted "Collection, storage and transfer" facilities.

The Transfer Station requires its citizens to sort items they bring to the station into separate waste components (household trash, common recyclables, items containing refrigerant, electronic devices, tires, construction debris, waste oil, brush, light bulbs, EPS – a type of light Styrofoam, light Styrofoam, bulky furniture and mattresses, and scrap metals). NHDES estimates that the average municipal recycling rate across the state is 26%.

Canterbury is a Pay-as-You-Throw (PAYT) community. A colored bag is required. These bags are available at the Transfer Station, Town Office, and Shaw's in Concord. The Transfer Station Manager performs periodic bag checks to ensure bags don't contain recyclable materials.

The Treasure House is a long-time staple in Canterbury. Its purpose is to divert unwanted, previously used items from being disposed of in the waste stream, at least temporarily. The Treasure House is limited in space so a posted policy defines what can be accepted. The goal is to display items that can be quickly picked up and reused. The Treasure House is staffed by volunteers and open only when they are available.

The Transfer Station accepts clean brush that is burned.

Composting of leaves or food waste is not currently being conducted.

SOLID WASTE IN NH

The State of New Hampshire has published its Solid Waste Management Plan (September 30, 2022). It set waste reduction goals for 25% by 2030 and 45% by 2050. It included all municipal solid waste (MSW) and construction and demolition debris (C&D) within these goal parameters.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECYCLING & WASTE DISPOSAL

In 2019, Northeast Resource Recovery Association (NRRA) estimated that 71% of communities in NH used source separation (sorting recyclables separately), however, those communities only encompassed 43% of the population at the time. Canterbury is one of these communities. The alternative is single stream programs that rely on regional Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF) to separate co-mingled recyclables. Currently, all single stream MRFs are located out-of-state.

Treasure House at Canterbury Transfer Station

Current Location

The current Transfer Station site consists of 6 acres, some of which may not be altered due to sitting on top of an uncapped landfill. Annual water quality testing is conducted around the site in dedicated test wells and surface sites. Minimum staffing includes the Transfer Station Manager and one assistant. The Highway Department provides additional staffing as needed. Space to store baled and recycled materials is limited.

UPGRADES

The most recent upgrades to the Transfer Station include new wiring and installation of energy efficient lighting, an electrical 200-amp service, a refurbished baler to recycle cardboard and mixed paper, installation of broadband cable, and the addition of a credit card reader to process cashless transactions.

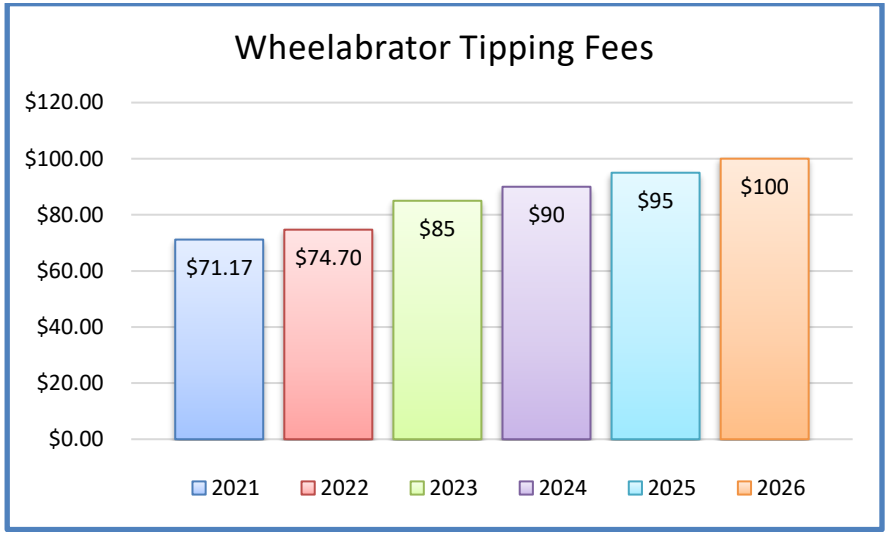
Pursuant to warrant article 2025-15, the Town hired Aries Engineering to review the current site, identify any environmental concerns, and provide a list of options for how the town can meet its solid waste needs in the future. It includes and analysis of A copy of this report is attached in the appendix.

TIPPING FEE TRENDS

Household trash is taken by the Town to the Wheelabrator Incinerator in Pennacook, NH. It is expected that the incinerator will continue to operate for at least the next 10 years, having recently extended a contract with a local city to dispose of its waste. Disposal fees, also known as tipping fees, have been steadily increasing. They were $71.14 per ton in 2021, rising to $74.70 in 2022, $85 in 2023, $90 in 2024, $95 in 2025, and $100 in 2026. They are expected to reach $120 by the end of their contract.

New Challenges & Concerns

The Transfer Station is situated in part, atop the Town's old uncapped landfill. The financial aspects of recycling are a key management issue. The market for selling recyclables is unsteady and unreliable. Storage of baled recycled materials waiting to be shipped to market is problematic at the current small site. In many instances, a penalty is assessed because a tractor trailer sent to market was not fully loaded. The inability to modify or construct structures on part of the site makes changes or modifications challenging. Space constraints limit what new initiatives the town is able to adopt. New initiatives such as composting food scraps, collecting packing Styrofoam (around new televisions, for example) for processing, and maintaining the current recycling efforts will maintain creative use of the current allowable space.



Objectives and Recommendations

Continue to fund a Capital Reserve Account to prepare for eventual landfill capping.

Objective One

Reduce the quantity of solid waste generated.

- Continue to participate in State Surplus Program for future purchases.
- Reduce plastic consumption and subsequent waste byproduct through public education programs and materials.
- Initiate food waste diversion; increase organic waste composting through public education programs and materials.
- Explore collaborative efforts to recycle materials.

Objective Two

Reduce the toxicity of our solid waste.

- Plan, Finance, and conduct Hazardous Waste Collection-events every two years.
- Educate and publicize safe strategies for disposing of complex and possibly dangerous waste (e.g. batteries, latex paint, cat litter, antifreeze, small gas cylinders, e-cigarettes/vaporizers, items containing mercury)

Objective Three

Maximize the diversion of solid waste from disposal.

- Expand the scope and efforts of the Treasure House by:
    - Eliciting volunteers to repair damaged items prior to disposal. If the item can be repaired easily, it will prevent its disposal entirely, thereby reducing the amount of waste disposed of.
    - Broadening outreach capabilities to facilitate the diversion of an item prior to disposal (Items not accepted at Treasure House) such as electronic devices and/or bulky furniture. These items could instead be listed on a bulletin board for someone to retrieve for free.

Objective Four

Ensure adequate capacity.

- Explore the possibility of relocation to a site with greater storage capacity and space to achieve goals.

Objective Five

Explore additional funding options to minimize tax burden.

- Research potential funding sources which may be allocated towards equipment costs and/or public education programs.