



**Weigh In
On Waste**

SWMP Factsheet

June 2023

Solid Waste Management in the Comox Strathcona Waste Management Service Area

What We Do:

- The Comox Strathcona Waste Management (CSWM) service is responsible for the public landfills, transfer stations and recycling depots within the Comox Valley and Strathcona Regional Districts. The CSWM service area is in the Coast Salish, Kwakwaka'wakw, and Nuu-chah-nulth territories.
- CSWM manages over 75,000 tonnes of waste and recycled material annually and oversees several diversion and education programs.
- It operates two regional waste management centres that serve the Comox Valley and Campbell River and several transfer stations that handle waste and recycling for the electoral areas. Most of the garbage is hauled to the modern engineered landfill in Cumberland. Residents that live near Zeballos or Tahsis have their waste buried in their local landfills.
- The CSWM does not provide pick up service directly from homes; curbside collection of garbage, recycling or organics is provided by municipalities and offered by private haulers to rural residents.

Key Facts:

- There is room to improve. On average, each person in the region generates 551 kg of waste annually. The provincial target is 350 kg of waste per person.
- In 2021, 68,000 tonnes of garbage went into the regional landfills; 51 per cent of that waste could have been diverted and either composted or recycled.
- In 2017, organics made up 25 per cent of what was being thrown in the garbage.
- With more people, comes more waste. Since 2011, the population in the region grew by 13 per cent – and is forecast to continue to grow over the next 20 years. With growth, construction and demolition waste also continues to increase.
- More waste in the landfill means more greenhouse gases. Since 2016, landfill gas collection has prevented the release of nearly 170,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent into the atmosphere.
- We can do better. Removing organic materials like grass clippings, food scraps and yard waste from the garbage reduces the amount of methane gas that is released from our landfills. In CSWM's compost facility they add oxygen to the piles of material so that only carbon dioxide gas is created, which is at least 25 times less harmful for the climate than methane gas.
- CSWM residents divert over 12,000 tonnes of waste a year through participation in Extended Producer Responsibility programs (e.g. tires, beverage containers, batteries etc.)
- Depending on how much waste we produce, the approved capacity of the regional landfill will last until between 2037 and 2047.

How Is It Paid For?

- The cost of operating landfills is funded through the tipping fees that are paid when materials are brought to the sites.
- The cost of constructing, expanding, and closing landfills is mainly covered through taxation. The tax rate in 2023 is \$0.1036 per \$1,000 of assessed value. A house worth \$250,000 will contribute \$25.90 towards the service, and a house worth \$750,000 will contribute \$77.69.
- Most of the recycling that is collected at the curb and from our depots is managed by extended producer responsibility programs, which are not funded by local government, but through the fees collected from consumers at the time products were purchased.
- As waste is diverted from the landfill, CSWM must analyze the costs associated with changes in consumer behaviour. Less waste going to the landfill is positive for the environment and preserves the current landfills, but also means a decrease in revenue from tipping fees. Moving forward, CSWM will need to consider a new mix of revenue sources, between tipping fees and taxation, to provide a stable funding source for the service.



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