

White Paper: Regional Wasteshed Construction Policy Recommendations for Flow Control

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Executive Summary:

The Larimer County Landfill is forecast to reach capacity by 2025. In 2015, the Cities of Fort Collins and Loveland, Larimer County, and the Town of Estes Park formed the North Front Range Wasteshed Coalition to plan for the future of waste material handling in the region.

From looking at the history of the problem and researching what other municipalities have done to mitigate similar issues, there are two policy recommendations for the North Front Range Wasteshed Coalition to consider including an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the four municipalities. These recommendations focus specifically on flow control for construction materials.

1. Recommendation #1 - Introduce flow control in construction permit process
2. Recommendation #2 - Tier system incentive

Introduction to Problem:

In 2016 the County commissioned a consulting firm to conduct a Wasteshed Analysis Study to better understand the current and future needs of the regional wasteshed. This analysis identified eleven possible waste infrastructure options, and Larimer County has selected five new facilities to possibly include within the wasteshed portfolio. These include: 1) A New County Landfill, 2) A Central Transfer Station 3) A Yard Waste Composting Facility 4) A Food Waste Composting Facility and 5) Construction and Demolition Debris Processing Facility. In order to make this new landfill the final one for Larimer County, innovative diversion approaches will be needed. The County has a variety of municipalities with diverse needs. For example, Fort Collins has hauler agreements with private businesses while Loveland has public haulers. Developing standard policies between these diverse communities to properly utilize these new facilities will be key to the long term success of the Larimer County regional wasteshed.

The new Larimer County Landfill aims to serve a variety of municipalities under an Intergovernmental Agreement. Within this agreement, it is likely that funding for new facilities will be provided by the County so long as municipalities provide policies to support these facilities (Depew 2018). According to the 2016 Wasteshed Analysis, construction and demolition (C&D) debris comprised 30% of all waste in 2016 and roughly 59% of divertable waste (City Council Work Session). C&D waste has the potential to drastically reduce landfill usage, so the county has prioritized a C&D diversion facility and flow control policies. Because C&D flow control is not commonly practiced in the United States, our analysis focused on possible best practices and important considerations moving forward.

Previous Solutions:

The policy recommendations proposed stemmed from research into what other local governments have done in the past. In San Diego, California communities are facing similar problems with their landfill expected to reach capacity by 2030. Unlike Larimer county, they have no proposal in the works for a new landfill and are attempting to extend the life of the current landfill as long as possible. Their agreements focus around efforts to divert construction and demolition debris to decrease landfill intake. The first attempt was by advertising voluntary diversion, but these attempts have incurred low rates of success, and there was a need to create legislation to ensure compliance. The city moved towards a permit system that includes a waste management form that lays out rules and expectations for construction waste with specific exceptions for small projects (roofs, decks, fences, etc.). Evidence has shown that these efforts have been satisfactory, and the city has been increasingly successful in diverting construction and demolition debris. In North Carolina, an overarching study was conducted to demonstrate how counties handle waste and flow control. While some have used franchise agreements, the majority of the state uses licensing agreements. Most of these agreements have flow control within them and designate who will be in charge of collection and what is accepted at the transfer station. Looking at past agreements, each county in North Carolina varies with who is tasked with waste collection and transportation to facilities. This case study also differentiated in whether waste was processed through the transfer station or delivered directly to the landfill.

Policy Recommendations for flow control of construction materials:

Our first recommendation is to include C&D flow control as a part of the construction permitting process. Construction companies are already familiar with local permitting processes because they are common practice across the region. With each construction or demolition permit application, a mandatory C&D disposal plan should be included. The requirement of a plan will make it easier to measure how well haulers and contractors are adhering to agreed upon disposal methods. Additionally, these plans can prevent code violations that would make C&D haulers frustrated by the new facility and related policies. In order to ensure cohesion across the County, we also recommend that the County include oversight labor and operations into their respective department to ensure municipal participation in C&D disposal plans and provide support to unincorporated participants.

Our second recommendation is to incentivize C&D haulers to comply with municipal code and permitting through a tiered benefits program. Compliance by C&D haulers will result in ranking and categorization into a tier- bronze, silver, gold, or platinum. Categorization will compose of points accumulated based on: 1) the credibility of proposed C&D disposal plans, 2) high rates of repurposable materials, 3) buying reclaimed materials from the new facility. Non-compliance would result in a loss of credibility. To make this system equitable to a variety of possible C&D haulers, we advise that this system be implemented based on proportionate metrics, rather than quantity metrics. We recommend proportionate metrics so that small businesses have the same opportunity to become platinum tier as large corporations if they each have proportionate waste diversion.

In turn, each tier will comprise of a differing set of benefits to C&D Haulers. Higher tiers would enjoy reduced C&D dumping fees, discounts on reclaimed materials, and an approved title from Larimer County (Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum Larimer County Wasteshed Steward). C&D companies can then market themselves as positive environmental stewards to consumers.

Additionally, we recommend that involved counties participating in the tier incentive program allow themselves to separate the accountability of private haulers from the reputation and responsibility of county jurisdiction through legislation. Ratings would thus not be a reflection of government liability, but rather the contracted haulers that collect waste materials as a separate operation.

Conclusion:

These recommendations, if included in the IGA, will provide beneficial elements that will contribute to the solution of the landfill quickly reaching its maximum capacity. Since this is a time-sensitive issue, and the landfill will reach capacity in the next six years, these mitigative recommendations are key next steps in resolving this problem. Introducing flow control into the construction permitting process and a tier system for construction companies are simple elements to an effective solution.

The next steps for this project will be to flesh out any other remaining elements of the public engagement plan and begin the public outreach process. In addition, the IGA will need to be drafted and signed onto by all involved parties: Fort Collins, Loveland, Larimer County, and Estes Park. The flow control recommendations must be presented and vetted in order to ensure consensus on all fronts, every step of the way through the facilities construction and implementation. After the IGA has been drafted and published by all parties, it can start to sift through the recommendations provided by the public and look into implementing the most viable suggestions. Both the mandatory flow control plan in the construction permitting process, and the tier system incentive structure will be subject to community insight and criticism, and subject to the same process.

Public Engagement Plan

Project Title: Regional Wasteshed Planning

Project Lead: Mitchell Pieper

Bottom Line Question: How can public engagement messaging be utilized to best meet the needs of the communities within the North Front Range Wasteshed after the Larimer County Landfill closes?

Overall Public Engagement Level: Engage constituents in a blend of active and passive methods of public engagement, while targeting the demographic of residents representing ages thirty and under.

Key Stakeholders:

- Elected officials and staff from the North Front Range Wasteshed Coalition
- Fort Collins residents
- Larimer County residents
- Loveland residents
- Town of Estes residents
- Chamber of Commerce Legislative Affairs and Environmental Committees
- Stakeholder Advisory Group
- Fort Collins' licensed residential waste haulers
- Student housing management & owners

Timeline: January 2019 - January 2021

Pre-Engagement Preparation:

We have conducted a brief spatial analysis to begin understanding potential engagement strategies to best reach populations under 30 years old. A map of the region our analysis targets is attached below. Primarily this spatial analysis yielded several key areas to target younger populations:

- Neighborhoods South of Mulberry, East of Taft Hill, North of Prospect, and West of Shields

- This neighborhood has a large volume of businesses and apartment complexes ideal for engagement opportunities.
- Neighborhoods South of Mountain, East of Shields, North of Laurel, and East of College
- Colorado State University Campus
 - We recommend partnering with Housing and Dining Services and the Center for Public Deliberation as well as other campus partners to integrate recycling and composting education.

With this analysis, we suggest that the City of Fort Collins partner with businesses and housing complexes in areas with large concentrations of young residents. These businesses could in turn integrate Wasteshed education into their practices through related workshops. For example, businesses as ambassadors for the Wasteshed, could be some of the first to offer composting as an option for customers to participate in. We recognize that the business sector could coordinate with the city to facilitate educational opportunities about how to best practice composting and recycling. In return, businesses would be able to market themselves as city partners and as Wasteshed stewards. Identifying opportunities for, and nurturing collaborations with, possible business partners early is important to the long term success of this engagement strategy.

Phase 1: Notify Public

Timeframe: January - March 2019

Key Messages:

- Between January and March of 2019 city and county staff will notify stakeholders and constituents about the intergovernmental agreement and public engagement plan of the Regional Wasteshed Project.
- Notification will assist in alerting and educating community members and stakeholders of the Regional Watershed Project and the public engagement plan and its potential impacts.

Tools and Techniques:

- News releases: Website www.fcgov.com/zerowaste
- Use of postcards or letters while targeting focused groups
- Utilizing email through city & external list
- Social media platforms, utilizing targeted ads & promotion of accounts via newsletters

and email signatures

- Temporary signage utilized in student housing locations, local businesses, general waste and recycling haulers facilities.
- Public participation is not to be expected during phase 1. Phase 1's focus will be on notifying and providing information for residents.

Phase 2: Educate Inform & Consult

Timeframe: June - December 2019

Key Messages:

- Between June and August of 2019 the North Front Range Wasteshed Coalition will seek to clarify the decision making process and correlated impacts, community objectives and input, and weigh the cost & benefits of the Regional Wasteshed Project.
- Further education of the project will allow for meaningful discussion and dialogue to occur, while giving the community the chance to add feedback and suggestions to the proposed plan before the final master plan is brought to a vote.

Tools and Techniques:

- Expanding the number of employees on the staff or hiring interns and aids to hold residential events for student housing is advised. Staff could take on the task of developing educational materials, such as informational pamphlets that would be distributed to residents. Employees also act as a source for additional information and are useful to answer frequently asked questions from residents. Staff can assist management and owners in complying with new wasteshed standards as they are adopted and develop and conduct surveys for residents in order to gather data and related public input.
- City and county staff will develop and provide educational materials for licensed waste haulers to distribute to residents while focusing on the end goal of targeting the younger demographic. This will provide another community-based social marketing platform that emphasizes the zero waste measures adopted in Fort Collins and how to get involved in proper practice.

- Implementation of a new hire training program is advised to consistently meet with student housing executives and businesses in order to gauge how policies are working and provide assistance for complying with ordinances as they are adopted.
- Develop & distribute welcoming packets to new homeowners that relay community goals, community values, city ordinances and encouragement in participation in a zero waste culture. Targeting residents from day one in their new community is crucial and it lets residents know that the city or county is taking the initiative.
- City and county staff will work towards collaborating with local businesses and student housing management in effort to set challenges towards zero waste. Staff will recognize which businesses and housing communities are leading the way and recognition will be displayed on www.fcgov.com/zerowaste & through email updates to subscribers.
- City & county staff will develop a online survey & a online platform for citizen comments that will be promoted through newsletters and city email list. Surveys & citizen blogs will be conducted and made available on <https://www.larimer.org/> <https://www.fcgov.com/>
- <https://www.colorado.gov/townofestespark> www.cityofloveland.org/government. Once established, surveys and citizens blogs will provide residents with the opportunity to express concerns and additional information for the implementation of the master plan that the North Front Range Wasteshed Coalition can evaluate.
- Phase 2's public participation should be the highest out of the three phases. Feedback and information provided will be used in the strategic implementation of the master plan.

Phase 3: Listen Follow Up Evaluate & Adapt

Timeframe: January - March 2020

Key Messages:

- The Regional Wasteshed Project will utilize feedback from recommendations and data collected on issues regarding both infrastructure and policy. The Regional Wasteshed Project seeks to complement current plans for infrastructure and policy by identifying opportunities that would aid in advancing towards the regional goal zero waste.
- Public input will be presented to North Front Range Wasteshed Coalition in a manner that conveys that decision makers are willing to alter current infrastructure and policy plans. Effectiveness of public engagement will be assessed and consideration of creating additional educational material, identifying stakeholders previously not identified and adjustment of decision dates will be considered.

Tools and Techniques:

- Staff will follow up with student housing management, businesses and residents on rationale for decisions, remaining questions and opinions. Follow ups will be conducted by in person meetings and individualized responses through all online platforms utilized for public input.
- Staff will develop an issues summary utilizing previously conducted surveys and citizen blogs. Information in the summary will then be presented in a staff report or memo that will be presented to The North Front Range Wasteshed Coalition.
- Staff and interns who actively worked in public engagement resident events will compile feedback into a summary or staff memo which will then be presented to The North Front Range Water Coalition
- Phase three still seeks to have considerable amounts in public participation especially for follow ups conducted by staff for housing management and businesses.

Sample Project Timeline:

January 2019: Staff will begin to contact stakeholders and the public through various platforms about the intergovernmental agreement and public engagement plan of the Regional Wasteshed Project. (Notify)

January 2019 - March 2019: Providing initial contact educating the public on the project and proposed timeline. Describes purpose of the project and upcoming public engagement effort. (Notify)

June 2019: Expansion of new staff & interns is completed, development of educational materials is complete and online surveys & citizen blogs become operational. (Educate)

June: 2019: Staff begin continuously meeting with various stakeholders, business and student housing management. Staff will collaborate with stakeholders in establishing sets of goals towards zero waste. (Educate, Listen)

July 2019: Staff & interns begin holding residential events at student housing locations, providing informational pamphlets, information to residential management and begin conducting surveys. (Educate, Listen)

July 2019: City licensed haulers are provided educational materials, distribution of educational materials to targeted residents proceeds. (Educate)

January 2020: Initial planning of briefing to the North Front Range Wasteshed Coalition begins. Staff will begin to form an issues summary which will then be developed into a staff report or memo. (Follow through, listen).

January 2020: Staff & interns continue following up with various stakeholders. (Follow through).

February 2020: Final public engagement memo is sent to North Front Range Wasteshed Coalition. (Follow through).

Fort Collins Public Engagement Opportunities of Populations Younger than 30

Summary:

Darker areas indicate a high percentage of populations under 30 years of age according to the 2010 Census.

Red glowing dots indicate restaurants, bars, or breweries recommended for public engagement in areas with large young populations.

We have also indicated large apartment complexes that the city could partner with in areas with large young populations.

