Renville County Public Survey

The Future of Our Construction & Demolition (C&D) Landfill

Introduction

The Renville County Landfill has been operating for more than 50 years. Over that time, the site has included three types of landfills:

- **A closed, older, unlined "Legacy" landfill:** This landfill was built in the 1970s and does not have a protective liner to help keep pollution from reaching groundwater.
- **A closed, lined "State-of-the-Art" landfill:** This landfill was built with a protective liner designed to help prevent pollution from reaching groundwater. It closed in 2018.
- **An active Construction and Demolition (C&D) Landfill:** This landfill accepts certain waste from construction, remodeling, storm cleanup, and demolition projects.

When the lined "state-of-the-art" landfill closed in 2018, Renville County stopped accepting household garbage at the site. Household garbage is now taken to the RRRSWA Transfer Station in Redwood Falls and then hauled to the Lyon County Regional Landfill for disposal. Although the closed lined landfill and the active C&D Landfill pose a lower risk to groundwater, the older, unlined "legacy" landfill from the 1970s remains an environmental concern because waste could affect nearby groundwater.

What does the C&D Landfill accept?

The Renville County C&D Landfill accepts waste from construction, remodeling, storm cleanup, and demolition projects, mainly those involving older, run-down, or damaged buildings. Examples of accepted materials include wood, concrete, bricks, roofing shingles, siding, windows, doors, flooring, plumbing and electrical fixtures, and drywall. These materials may come from homes, businesses, farm buildings, and other structures in cities and rural areas. The facility also helps manage other materials that should be kept out of regular landfills when possible. These include household hazardous waste, tires, scrap metal, and certain recyclable materials.

The current C&D Landfill is expected to reach capacity and close within the next two years. Renville County must decide how to handle construction and demolition waste in the future.

What are the options for the future?

Each option has different costs and potential effects on taxpayers, disposal fees, home improvement projects, the environment, and the community.

Option A: (Close the C&D Landfill and Take No Further Action): Close the existing C&D Landfill and place the responsibility of the management of all C&D wastes in accordance with Minnesota Rules directly on the homeowner, contractor, or hauler to their own selected facility.

- Other lined landfills that may accept this waste are generally more than 60 miles away.
- Residents and contractors will need to travel farther and may need to pay more to dispose of waste.

- Once closed, Renville County gives up the right/ability to reopen a C&D landfill and/or transfer station in the future.

Option B: **(Close the C&D Landfill and Build a C&D Transfer Station):** Close the existing C&D Landfill and build an open-top transfer station at the current site. A transfer station is a place where waste is collected before being hauled to another landfill for final disposal.

- C&D waste would still be accepted locally but would then be hauled to an existing lined landfill, generally more than 60 miles away.
- The existing RRRSWA Transfer Station in Redwood Falls does not have enough capacity to handle and transfer the total generated volume of C&D waste in Renville County.

Option C: **(Close the C&D Landfill. Build a C&D Transfer Station and Recover Reusable Materials):** Close the existing C&D Landfill and build a transfer station at the current site. This option would also invest in a program to recover materials that can be reused or recycled.

- Separating reusable and recyclable materials would reduce the amount of waste that needs to be hauled to a lined landfill (generally more than 60 miles away), lowering transportation needs and extending the usefulness of the facility.

Option D: **(Modify Existing Facility with a New Lined C&D Landfill Cell and Recovery Facility):** Close the existing C&D Landfill and make major improvements to the current site. This option has three main parts:

1. **Address the unlined "legacy" landfill:** Build a new, smaller, lined cell for the old landfill. Move the old waste into this protected cell to help reduce long-term environmental risks.
2. **Establish a new lined C&D Landfill Cell:** Construct a new landfill cell with a protective liner designed to help prevent pollution from reaching groundwater. This would allow the County to continue accepting C&D waste locally for years to come.
3. **Develop a recycling and reuse program over time:** Develop a recovery facility to separate materials that can be reused or recycled. This would reduce the amount of waste placed in the new landfill and help it last longer.

Your Input Matters! Renville County must decide how to manage C&D waste after the current landfill closes. Each option has different costs and potential impacts on local taxpayers, waste disposal fees, residents completing home improvement projects, contractors, and the environment. **Should the County reinvest in our local C&D Landfill with recycling options, or close the C&D Landfill and send C&D waste elsewhere?** Each option has costs and trade-offs. Your feedback will help County leaders understand what matters most to the public as they consider the next steps.

Please take approximately 5–10 minutes to complete this survey and share your thoughts on the future of C&D waste management in Renville County. Your responses are confidential.

SECTION 1: Awareness and Experience

1. Before receiving this survey, did you know that the Renville County Construction and Demolition (C&D) Landfill is expected to reach full capacity and close in about two years?

☐ Yes, I was aware.
☐ I knew the landfill was running out of space, but I did not know it would be full in about two years.
☐ No, I was not aware.

2. Have you, or a contractor working on your property, used the Renville County C&D Landfill in the past few years? *(Select all that apply.)*

Examples include replacing a roof or siding, remodeling a home, tearing down a building, or disposing of materials from storm damage.

☐ Yes, I have taken materials to the landfill myself.
☐ Yes, a contractor working on my property has used the landfill.
☐ No, I have not needed to use the landfill.
☐ I am unsure whether my contractor has used the landfill.

SECTION 2: Options for the Future

Renville County is considering four options to manage construction and demolition (C&D) waste after the current landfill reaches capacity. Please read each option and indicate how much you support or oppose it.

3. Option A: Close the C&D Landfill and Take No Further Action.

Once the current C&D Landfill is full, the County would close it and stop accepting C&D waste. Residents, businesses, and waste haulers would be responsible for finding another landfill that accepts waste from "out of County." The closest landfills that accept this type of waste are about 50 to 62 miles from the Renville County C&D Landfill, or roughly an hour away one way. If the County closes the landfill, it would give up the ability to reopen a public C&D landfill or establish another public landfill in Renville County in the future.

How much do you support or oppose Option A?

☐ Strongly support
☐ Somewhat support
☐ Neither support nor oppose
☐ Somewhat oppose
☐ Strongly oppose

4. Option B: Close the C&D Landfill and Build a C&D Transfer Station.

The County would close the existing C&D Landfill when it reaches capacity and use the site as a transfer station. A transfer station is a place where waste is collected, packed into larger loads, and hauled to another landfill for final disposal. Under this option, C&D waste would be collected at the current site, compacted, loaded onto larger trucks or trailers, and transported about 62 miles to a regional landfill in another county.

This option would avoid the cost of building a new lined landfill. However, the regional landfill would set its own disposal fees. These fees are expected to increase from the current rate of $34 per ton to about $97.75 per ton for residents, businesses, and construction or demolition projects. The County would also have to pay for local operations, maintenance, and transportation. Disposal fees at the regional landfill could increase further over time.

How much do you support or oppose Option B?

☐ Strongly support
☐ Somewhat support
☐ Neither support nor oppose
☐ Somewhat oppose
☐ Strongly oppose

5. Option C: Close the C&D Landfill. Build a C&D Transfer Station and Recover Reusable Materials.

The County would invest public funds to build a facility that sorts C&D waste and separates materials that can be reused or recycled, such as concrete, metal, and clean wood. Materials that cannot be reused or recycled would still need to be hauled to a lined landfill in another county. The waste would be collected at the site, compacted, loaded onto larger trucks, and transported about 62 miles to a regional landfill.

Recovering reusable and recyclable materials would reduce the amount of waste that needs to be hauled away and buried. It could also generate income from recovered materials and help regional landfills last longer. This option would require an upfront public investment in a transfer station and recovery facility. However, state grants may be available to help pay for some of the recovery facility's construction costs.

Disposal fees are expected to increase from the current rate of $34 per ton to about $97.75 per ton for residents, businesses, and construction or demolition projects. The County would also have to pay for local operations, maintenance, and transportation. Regional landfill fees could increase further over time. Although less waste would need to be hauled long distances, the County would still need to transport and manage the materials that cannot be recovered.

How much do you support or oppose Option C?

☐ Strongly support
☐ Somewhat support
☐ Neither support nor oppose
☐ Somewhat oppose
☐ Strongly oppose

6. Option D: Modify Existing Facility with a New Lined C&D Landfill Cell and Recovery Facility

The old, unlined household garbage “legacy” landfill from the 1970s remains a long-term environmental concern for Renville County because it could potentially affect groundwater. Under this option, the County would move the old waste and place it into a new, smaller landfill cell with a protective liner. This would help reduce long-term environmental risks and free up space at the

existing site. The freed-up space would allow the County to build a new lined C&D Landfill and a facility to recover materials that can be reused or recycled. The project would be designed to meet current Minnesota rules.

Using public funds for these improvements could allow the County to continue accepting C&D waste locally for more than 30 years. This option would keep transportation costs low because waste could be disposed of locally. The Renville County Board would set the local disposal fees, rather than a regional landfill in another county. State grants may also be available to help pay for some of the recovery facility's construction costs.

This option would have a high upfront cost. Construction is estimated to cost about **$8 million to $10 million**, with disposal fees estimated at about **$60 per ton**.

How much do you support or oppose Option D?

☐ Strongly support
☐ Somewhat support
☐ Neither support nor oppose
☐ Somewhat oppose
☐ Strongly oppose

7. After reviewing all four options, which option would you prefer Renville County to pursue for managing construction and demolition (C&D) waste in the future? *(Select one.) These are listed in order of required county financial investment, from least to greatest.*

☐ **Option A:** Close the C&D Landfill and take no further action. Residents, businesses, and haulers would be responsible for finding other disposal sites.
☐ **Option B:** Close the C&D Landfill and build a C&D transfer station. Haul waste to a regional landfill in another county.
☐ **Option C:** Close the C&D Landfill. Build a C&D transfer station and recovery facility to separate and recycle reusable materials before hauling the remaining waste to another county.
☐ **Option D:** Modify existing facility for new lined C&D Landfill and recovery facility, allowing for local disposal and recycling.
☐ **Unsure / Need more information before deciding.**

SECTION 3: Community Impacts

8. If Renville County builds a new lined C&D Landfill and a facility to recover reusable and recyclable materials, what would be your two biggest concerns, if any? *(Select up to two answers).*

☐ Environmental impacts, such as dust, groundwater quality, or soil safety.
☐ Continued heavy truck traffic and damage to local roads.
☐ Costs to local taxpayers or increases in public fees.
☐ I have no major concerns about expanding the existing landfill.

9. If the C&D Landfill closes and waste must be hauled to another facility, disposal fees are expected to increase significantly. How concerned are you about how this could affect you and your community in the future?

Possible effects include higher costs for home repairs and remodeling, delays in removing unsafe or run-down buildings, higher costs to build new homes, or illegal burning, burying, or dumping of waste.

☐ Extremely concerned
☐ Somewhat concerned
☐ Not very concerned
☐ Not at all concerned

SECTION 4: Household and Travel

10. How far would you be willing to travel one way to dispose of your own construction and demolition (C&D) waste?

☐ 11–20 miles
☐ 21–35 miles
☐ 36–50 miles
☐ More than 50 miles
☐ Not applicable — I would not transport C&D waste myself

SECTION 5: Additional Comments

11. What other thoughts, concerns, or suggestions do you have about how Renville County should manage C&D waste after the current landfill reaches capacity?

Thank you for taking the time to share your opinions. Your feedback will help County leaders understand the public's priorities as they consider the future of construction and demolition waste management in Renville County.