Bartholomew County Solid Waste Management District (BCSWMD) Five Year Plan

2027-2031



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History of BCSWMD

The City of Columbus and Bartholomew County have been leaders in the municipal management of solid waste since 1969. Prior to 1969, the community's disposal needs were served by several open dumpsites. Recognizing the need for improved services, the City and County formed a blue-ribbon commission recommended a need for both a modern sanitary landfill and a management authority to oversee its construction and operation.

In 1969, via an inter-local agreement, the City and County formed the Columbus-Bartholomew Solid Waste Disposal Authority (SWDA). The SWDA opted to construct a waste shredding operation in the building now housing the Columbus City Garage. The aim was to mill all possible waste, and landfill the resultant fluff on City-County owned property (adjacent to the City Garage and Recycling Center). The ungrindable portion was to be landfilled on leased property on CR 500 E (Petersville solid-fill site). The mill proved unreliable and was shut down after only a few months of service. The SWDA then leased property from Dora Fischer on CR 250 E and opened the Clifty Hill Landfill (aka the Dora Fischer landfill). The authority began looking for a new landfill site, ultimately locating on what was then SR 46, just east of Petersville. The Clifty Hill landfill was closed in 1974, when the new Bartholomew County Landfill opened on SR 46 (BCLF 1). The authority functioned primarily as a landfill manager from 1974 until 1990.

With the advancements in landfill technology, increased reporting requirements, impending State legislation to reduce waste disposal, and an active local recycling task force, the SWDA hired its first full-time administrator in July 1990. That same year the State legislature passed landmark legislation requiring all counties to form solid waste districts and to develop a 20-year waste management plan to achieve State waste reduction goals.

Upon formation of the Bartholomew County Solid Waste Management District in July of 1991, the SWDA was modified in both title and responsibility. The Solid Waste Disposal Authority became the Solid Waste Management Authority, or SWMA. The SWMA was charged by the District Board with the day-to-day operation of all solid waste programs, including landfill construction and operation. The District Board retained sole discretion with regard to the formulation of a comprehensive 20-year solid waste management plan, and the selection of a new landfill site. Until January 1999, the SWMA remained responsible for the operation of our sanitary landfill, the City

Garage foundry sand monofill, our municipal recycling and education center, a rural refuse collection program, a household hazardous waste collection program, and our 10-acre municipal composting operation. In January 1999, at the request of the SWMA Board of Director's, the District Board placed the SWMA in indefinite inactive status. The District Board assumed the daily management responsibilities formerly held by the SWMA.

BCLF I closed to the general public on January 31, 1999. The site, modified to serve as a Saturday convenience station, opening in April 1999. BCLF I is still under post-closure care as of 2026. BCLF II was opened to the public on February 1, 1999 after a lengthy public and permit process. BCLF II has public reuse facilities, teacher reuse facilities, public drop-off recycling, and a public refuse disposal area.

During the transition to a formal Solid Waste District and transition from SWDA to SWMA to Board of Directors formal recycling efforts were also established. Recycling efforts in Bartholomew County began with an ad hoc committee, the Recycling Task Force, in October 1988. The committee conducted a study and concluded composting would have the greatest impact in landfill space savings as well a need for conventional recycling was noted. This need created a drop-off recycling program in May 1990, Saturday only at a storage building behind the City Garage. Due to the volume at the drop-off facility the currently Recycling Center was constructed in February 1992. The construction of the Recycling Center afforded the District the ability to begin a Household Hazardous Waste collection day on a weekly basis thus forming Tox-A-Way Wednesday in 1994 after the purchase of a small purpose containment building.

In 1994, the Commercial Cardboard and Office Paper program began as a partnership between the City of Columbus and SWMD with approximately 200 participants. In 2014, the SWMD assumed the sole responsibility of collection.

Respectively during the transition period, 1998 to 1999, Teacher Reuse at the Recycling Center and Public Reuse at the Landfill opened. This allowed the District to take another slice out of the landfill waste stream. In 2003, an additional Teacher Reuse space was opened at the Landfill.

New programs have been added through the years including recycling of CFC appliances in 2000 at the Landfill, Mercury containing products in 2002, computers in 2003, CFL bulbs in 2008, and all electronics recycling in 2012.

Due to budget reductions from a divide between Revenues vs. Expenses our HHW list was reduced to only cost-effective items and our Educator position was cut in 2023. Education is still provided to adults as well as community and media outreach. In 2025, after a financial analysis our Commercial Cardboard and Office Paper Program (CCOP) was dropped at the Recycling Center and replaced with a Commercial Recycling Pad at the Landfill for a fee. As well, the District has got out of the processing of recycling material and only collects/containerizes. In 2026, we expect the Bartholomew County Landfill has 57-80 years of life after some recent changes to the height and slope of the Landfill as well as small border changes.

Bartholomew County District Board, Citizens Advisory Committee, and Staff (As of November 2026)

Michael Bell- Chairman, County Council
Carl Lienhoop- Vice-Chairman, County Commissioner
Larry Kleinhenz -County Commissioner
Tony London- County Commissioner
Ohmer Miller- Hope Town Council
Mary Ferdon- Mayor, City of Columbus
Josh Burnett- Columbus City Council

Citizens' Advisory Committee

Cathy Caldie	(E)	Bob Borella	(E)
Louise Norman	(E)	Dennis Tibbetts	(E)
Jason Weller	(S)	Jennifer Ehara	(E)

(Constituent Interest; **E= Environment S= Solid Waste)**

District Staff

Director	Heather Siesel
Operations Manager	Randy Murphy
Controller	Amber Breeden
Office Manager	Leigha Bruning
Recycling Center Supervisor	Dan Sutton
Recycling Center Assistants	Madison Edwards
	Erica Henry
C&D/Yard Waste Operator	Mike Smith
Weighmaster	Shelli Conrad
Scale Operator/Floater	Carl Moore
Small Load Operators	Jerry Bense Jr.
	Dylan Fleener
Reuse Assistant/Education Outreach	Renay Cannon

Bartholomew County District Demographics

Bartholomew County is located in south central Indiana. It is 409 square miles and includes the cities and towns of Clifford, Columbus, and a portion of the town of Edinburgh, Elizabethtown, Hartsville, Hope, Jonesville, Petersville, and Taylorsville. The general population of Bartholomew County is 82,208 residents, while the City of Columbus is 50,474 residents. The County's age distribution is 5.9 % of the population under the age of 5, 23.0% is under the age of 18, and 18.5% of the population is 65 years and older. 50.1% of the population is women, while men make up 49.9%. 84.9% of county residents being Caucasian, 3.0% African American, 7.1% American Indian & Alaska Native, 7.1% Asian, 0.1% Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander and 10.1% are Latino. Education levels in the county include 92% of the population are High School graduates or higher and 34.1% have a Bachelor's degree or higher. 12.7% of Bartholomew County's residents live below the poverty line. Median household income is $66,978 (All data was reported from the 2020 Census results.) **In 2031, Bartholomew County population is estimated to grow from 87,000 residents (Indiana Business Research Center).**



Waste Generation in Bartholomew County

Bartholomew County generated 141,1883.10 tons of municipal solid waste in 2025. (IDEM Waste Data 2025- Latest numbers available) Our 2025 Waste Diversion Rate was 25.4% with all District residential/commercial recycling, reuse, HHW, and yard waste versus landfill disposal. The 2,057 tons of recycling gives us 13,101 cubic yards of space savings at the Bartholomew County Landfill.

Waste Facilities

Bartholomew County Landfill II

City Garage Construction Demolition Disposal Site

Petersville Convenience Station

Harrison Convenience Station

Large-Scale Collection Services

Rumpke

Best Way Disposal

WM (Waste Management)

City of Columbus

Yard Waste/Composting

Bartholomew Yard Waste Site

Integrated Elements Compost LLC

Existing Waste Reduction Efforts

Bartholomew County Solid Waste Management District has an integrated solid waste management system with all components from Source Reduction, Reuse to Recycling, Composting to Final Disposal.

Waste Reduction Services offered by BCSWMD

Education (Adult- HSE Fairs, Events, Presentations, Publications, PR)

Reuse (Public Reuse at Bartholomew County Landfill II, Little Red School House Bartholomew County Landfill, Little Red School House Columbus/Bartholomew Recycling Center)

Recycling (Harrison Convenience Station, Petersville Convenience Station, Bartholomew County Landfill II, Columbus/Bartholomew Recycling Center, Bartholomew County Yard Waste Site)

Roll-offs- Harrison Convenience Station, Petersville Convenience Station, and Bartholomew County Landfill II

Drive-Through- Columbus/Bartholomew Recycling Center

Electronics- Bartholomew County Landfill II and Columbus/Bartholomew Recycling Center

Commercial Cardboard and Office Paper Recycling Program- Columbus/Bartholomew Recycling Center (drop-off or curbside)

Tire Recycling- Bartholomew County Landfill II

Household Hazardous Waste (Tox-A-Way at Columbus/Bartholomew Recycling Center)

Yard Waste- Bartholomew Yard Waste Site

Other Waste Reduction Services in Bartholomew County (Non-BCSWMD)

City of Columbus Curbside Program

Speedy Shred- Document Shredding and Recycling

Columbus Regional Hospital Emergency Room, Bartholomew County Health Department, Walgreens, CVS- Medications and/or Sharps Disposal Program

Various "second hand stores" such as Psi Iota Xi, Sans Souci, Goodwill, Salvation Army, Orphan Grain Train

Best Buy- Battery & Electronics Recycling

Lowes- Battery & Bulb Recycling

Oil Recycling- Most Automotive Stores

Metal Recycling- Scrap Yards such as Kroot, Garden City Iron & Metal

Plastic Films- Most grocery stores, big-box retailers including Kroger, Jay-C, Walmart, Target, Lowe's, Kohl's

Propane Tanks- Blue Rhino locations such as Walgreens, Menard's, Wal-Mart, Kroger, Rural King, Jay-C

Prediction of Solid Waste Needs in the Next Five Years

In 2031, Bartholomew County population is estimated to grow from 87,000 residents (Indiana Business Research Center). This is an approximate 5.0% increase in a just a little over a ten year period. Bartholomew County Landfill took in 113,919 tons of municipal solid waste in 2025. Bartholomew County projections for 2031 show waste generation rate of 119,614.95, an increase of 5,695 tons. **The small increase in population potentially correlates to an increased need of waste management facilities. Our current facilities are able to accommodate the needs of the population increase, but added services may need to be considered.**

Five Year Plan Goals

BCSWMD is committed to:

1) Providing excellent customer service;
2) Minimizing the solid waste stream and managing it comprehensively;
3) Conserving financial, physical, and natural resources for current and future residents of our district.

Objectives to Achieve These Goals:

Goal 1: Provide Excellent Customer Service

Objectives:

a) The District should address the demand for greater, more convenient recycling services.

b) The District should increase the market value of its compost and mulch products and services so as to better manage the inventory and provide a good return.

c) Tipping fees and volumes should be periodically reviewed for reasonableness and to drive desired behaviors.

d) Landfill and recycling facility hours of operation should be periodically reviewed relative to service demand and cost-effectiveness.

e) Services should be reviewed periodically to ensure that residents of the City and County are treated equitably.

f) The District should decide whether and how to serve (or avoid serving) non-Bartholomew County Residents at its facilities.

g) The District should refine its service offerings through deeply understanding citizen requirements and increase the utilization of its services through effective marketing.

h) The District should provide community education to influence behaviors.

Goal 2: Minimize the Waste Stream and Manage it Comprehensively

Objectives:

i) Every type of waste should have a diversion strategy and a management plan.

j) The District should strive to adopt best practices in solid waste management.

k) The District should continuously improve its diversion efforts so as to never have to site a replacement landfill again.

Goal 3: Conserve Financial, Physical, and Natural Resources

Objectives:

l) The District should seek to drive resource-conserving behaviors not only through education, but also, when necessary, through economic incentives and disincentive.

m) The District should recognize the real value of the landfill to the community so that it is conserved for generations deep into the future, knowing that the opportunity cost of consuming it today is the contentious matter and expense of siting another landfill.

n) The District should be diligent in seeking to provide services in a cost-effective manner.

o) The District should ensure competitive bidding for all major contracts and evaluate periodically whether any services should be moved in-house or outsourced.

p) The District should evaluate capitalizing on Waste-to-Energy opportunities.

q) The Diversion efforts should seek to generate feedstocks for industries and help create economic and employment opportunities in the region.

Work Plans (Top Recommended Initiatives)

Goal 1: Provide Excellent Customer Service

1. Provide excellent Customer Service and be a resource in waste reduction and waste in Bartholomew County. Continue to investigate cost-effective ways to provide community outreach/education.
2. Promote our programs and services throughout the County in cost-effective ways and community-based resource partners.

Goal 2: Minimize the Waste Stream and Manage it Comprehensively

1. BCSWMD recycling programs to remain as is, market conditions warrant caution with any expansions.
2. BCSWMD reuse programs to remain, as they are great diversion programs at low cost.
3. Restore some HHW products that we have common inquires and limited local resources for disposal/recycling as the budget allows after investigation of how those items fit into the available budget. (Investigate adding back gas, antifreeze, bulbs, paint)
4. Continue to educate the community about Yard Waste site acceptable items, partner with the City of Columbus.
5. Promote food waste recycling at home and try to entice a company to provide food waste composting locally to residents.
6. Promote cardboard recycling opportunities in Bartholomew County.

Goal 3: Conserve Financial, Physical, and Natural Resources

7. Keep accessing our Revenues vs. Expenditures annually especially with the SB1 potential impact.

Financing

The hope with all implementation efforts is to utilize current funding methods to implement plans. Currently, the Solid Waste District receives a small property tax assessment (just under 3 cents per accessed $100, 2026 rate is $0.0282) in addition to Landfill tipping fees, sale of recyclables, sale of yard waste, user fees for recycling, farm ground rental, and investments. New potential funds sources could include grants as available and potential LIT funding if deemed necessary.

Five Year Plan Approval

This five- year plan for the Bartholomew County Solid Waste Management District has been approved on Thursday, November 19, 2026 at the November Meeting by the SWMD District Board of Directors.

Michael, Bell BCSWMD Chairperson

Capital Assets Aqusition Plan 2027-20238

ROUGH ESTIMATED FUTURE COSTS

2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Landfill Paving $135,000, Tree Clearing $75,000, Sycamore Land Trust Contract Expires, Convenience Stations Contract Expires	Partial Landfill Closure $1,000,000, Landfill Paving $135,000, Computers $30,000, Engineering Updates (IDEM) $20,000, CD Site & BCLF II Permit Renewal	Landfill Paving $135,000, New Printers/Copier $10,000, YW Regisration Renewal & Air Permit Renewal, Landfill Operating Contract Renewal	Landfill Cell Construction- $1,700,000	Operation's Manager Truck $50,000, Director's Truck $45,000, Wheelloader $250,000	Landfill Cell Construction $1,800,000
2033	**2034**	**2035**	**2036**	**2037**	**2038**
CD Site Cell Construction, Engineering Updates	Landfill Tree Clearing		Landfill Cell Construction		Landfill Cell Construction, Engineering Updates