

# Recycling, alternatives listed for Laramie solid waste management

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Laramie residents only recycle about 6.2 percent of citywide solid waste generated each year, one local expert said.

Laramie creates about 120 tons per day of waste, Marjorie Bedessem of Trihydro Corporation said as she presented an update to Trihydro's 20-year Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan (ISWMP) designed for the city at a city council work session Tuesday. Trihydro's plan will likely be complete this summer, but the city will have to approve and select the appropriate solid waste management option from several outlined in the plan.

In 2006, the Wyoming Legislature mandated that all cities come up with ISWMPs by the summer of 2009.

"In 2006, the Legislature was particularly forward-thinking with respect to solid waste management," Bedessem said.

The Legislature also guaranteed between 50-90 percent in funding costs for the ISWMPs, depending on how cities planned with neighboring communities. To receive the highest level of reimbursement from the state, the city of Laramie is planning its ISWMP with the city of Cheyenne and with the Eastern Laramie County South west district (ELDSWDD). All locations three currently have working landfills.

Trihydro's plan, Bedessem said, will attempt to integrate recycling and composting into the city's solid waste systems.

"If we are going to plan for a 20- year period, is it reasonable to assume this percentage (of recycling) is going to stand?" Bedessem said. "Or are we going to set (greater recycling) goals?"

Both the city of Laramie and the City of Cheyenne have set a 20 percent recycle-rate goal for municipal solid waste within 20 years, Bedessem said.

"It is not really feasible to achieve that by a voluntary system alone," Bedessem said, adding that the increase will have to come with city-sponsored programs such as a curbside recycling or through reuse centers for viable materials like windows, doors and other household amenities.

There are 51 operating landfills in Wyoming, Bedessem said. All but three are unlined, and most of the unlined landfills in the state appear to be leaking. There are 2,600 water supply sources within one mile of these landfills.

"Our neighboring states like Montana and South Dakota have 12-15 landfills (each), and they have a lot more population," Bedessem said. "Fifty-one landfills is actually quite a few landfills."

Present at the meeting were councilors Joe Vitale, Dee Mickelson, Klaus Hanson, Joe Shumway, Bryan Shuster, Erik Molvar, Karl McCracken and Mayor Jodi Guerin.

The plan by Trihydro outlines four alternatives for solid waste management in Southeastern Wyoming.

n Alternative One: Line the existing Laramie landfill and make other regulatory updates to extend its life. Maintain the landfill in Cheyenne and line the landfill at ELDSWDD.

n Alternative Two: Build a new regional solid waste facility located somewhere between Laramie and Cheyenne, to be shared by both municipalities.

n Alternative Three: Neither municipality would operate a landfill and all solid waste would be hauled to a landfill in Ault, Colo.

n Alternative Four: : Line the existing Laramie landfill and make other regulatory updates to extend its life. Maintain the landfill in Cheyenne and build a new lined landfill at ELDSWDD.

"We are in the middle of an economic analysis of these projects," Bedessem said when Vitale asked about the specific cost of each alternative. "The project is not done ... at the end of the project, you'll have all the costs and ... an implementation plan for the alternatives."

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