

Consultation Topic 1

The future of

Waitomo District Landfill



During the development of our LTP 2024-2034, Council considered the future of the Waitomo District Landfill (WDL).

At that time the best option was to continue with disposing waste at our landfill at Te Kūiti and develop the next part to make space for more waste.

We have reviewed this matter further and now present two options for your input:

- Option 1 - Expansion of and continued disposal, at Waitomo District Landfill
- Option 2 - Waste disposal outside the district (**Preferred Option**)



What has changed in recent times?

Waste volumes into our landfill have dropped over the past few years. Domestic waste is also reducing but more importantly, more than 60% of the current waste comes from commercial companies or from out of district.

Reduced waste volumes are great for the environment, but these volumes help cover the operational costs of the landfill.

Any costs not recovered by gate fees are recovered from rates. The costs don't really change based on volume, so any reduction actually means ratepayers need to pay more to keep the landfill open.

This means if we lose our commercial waste stream ratepayers would need to contribute approximately \$106 extra annually if we develop the next part of the landfill.

Our landfill is expected to reach its resource consent tonnage limit by June 2026.

We now need to decide to either expand our current landfill now (there is a new resource con-

What is a Carbon Credit?

Carbon credits are permits that allow the owner to emit a certain amount of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases. Solid waste and rubbish emit these types of gases.

One credit allows the emission of one tonne of carbon dioxide.

Waitomo District Council needs to purchase carbon credits for the Emissions Trading Scheme to offset the gases emitted from the waste at the landfill.

sent in place) or close the landfill after it is full and transport all waste and sludge out of the district.

If we decide on the latter, we can at a later date expand and open the new landfill 'cell', under the new resource consent.

Other major landfill costs are the government's Waste Minimisation Levy (a charge by government on every tonne going into a landfill) and the purchase of Carbon Credits.

Larger landfills such as Hampton Downs are significantly more efficient and emit less emissions per tonne than smaller landfills like ours.



Option 1

Expansion of and continued disposal, at Waitomo District Landfill

Major works are required to expand the current landfill. The site is an old quarry so extensive works including highwall stabilisation, gas capture and flaring, and covering up the existing landfill are all required.

The estimated total is \$6.466 million, plus increased ongoing operational costs.

A large amount of this cost is to reduce the risk of rock debris falling into the landfill. Gas capture and flaring may reduce the cost of buying carbon credits.

- If the landfill is expanded, Council has the benefit of retaining control but there are risks to doing this. The development of the new landfill cell is a major civil works project. There is always potential for cost and time overruns.
- Once the landfill is expanded, if waste volumes continue to decline, gate fee revenue would reduce, meaning rate-payers would need to pay a greater share of the landfill costs.
- A recent enquiry from an out of district user could put more volume into our landfill making this option more viable.



Option 2

Waste disposal outside the district (preferred option)

This option involves transporting waste and sludge to a landfill or wastewater sludge facility outside the district.

Council would no longer have the significant expense and risks associated with developing and operating an expanded landfill.

However, we could be exposed to increased costs for this service, which we may not be able to control.

To mitigate this risk, we could decide to open the next cell of the landfill if the costs to transport out of town become too high. Costs vary with the amount of waste transported, so less volume will mean less cost.

What does this mean for the Te Kūiti Transfer Station (recycling and drop off site at the landfill) ?

If it is decided to transport waste out of town, an improved, covered Transfer Station would be constructed where refuse (unsorted waste) would be dropped on a large flat floor. This will allow for more sorting, and the potential to recycle more, so less waste needs to be transported out of town.

The remaining waste would be loaded directly off the floor into transport bins. The area would need to safely accommodate public drop-offs, smaller trucks delivering refuse from around the district and larger trucks transporting the waste out of town.

What is our preferred option?

Our preferred option is:

Option 2

Waste disposal outside the district

This means once the landfill is full, we will start transporting waste and sludge out of the district. We will also construct an improved fit-for-purpose transfer station.

The financials provided are in today's dollars with no inflation applied and the estimated annual charge is based on the average rates requirement over 10 years.

Rate impact:

Solid waste rate - estimated annual charge per SUIP

2024/2025 current year
\$276

Expansion of landfill
\$470 (10 year average)

or:
Expansion of landfill - reduced commercial waste
\$576 (10 year average)

Preferred option – ship out waste
\$462 (10 year average)

Debt impact:

The estimate cost for option 1 is \$6.466 million.

The estimated cost for option 2 is about \$2.5 million for transfer station improvements and final capping.

Level of service impact:

Option 1: No change

Option 2: Increased recycling and recovery, layout and functioning of transfer station more user friendly.

What is SUIP? (Separately Used or Inhabited Part) Any part or parts of a property (rating unit) that is used or occupied by the ratepayer, or someone other than the ratepayer, for more than one single use. Many properties have multiple units or dwellings on the same land title e.g. a block of flats or commercial units. Certain Targeted Fixed Rates apply to each dwelling or each separately used part of a property.