



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Update on Scholl Canyon Landfill Operations and Closure.

1. Motion Directing Staff regarding the Future of the Scholl Canyon Landfill, from one of the following options:
 - (a) Do not revise the City's Wasteshed Ordinance and allow the Landfill to close upon reaching capacity, currently estimated in December 2025.
 - (b) Revise the City's Wasteshed Ordinance to exclude all current users of the Landfill except for Glendale, which means the Landfill will continue operating until approximately June 2030.
 - (c) Revise the City's Wasteshed Ordinance to exclude the City of Pasadena and continue allowing all other current users of the Landfill, which means the Landfill will continue operating until approximately July 2028.
 - (d) Revise the City's Wasteshed Ordinance to exclude all current users of the Landfill except for Glendale and Pasadena, which means the Landfill will continue operating until approximately June 2026.
2. Motion Directing Staff Regarding Scholl Canyon Landfill operations.

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Action Item

Approved for September 13, 2022 **calendar**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recently, City Council requested a report regarding the Scholl Canyon Landfill (Landfill) and specifically, on alternatives and obligations relating to the closure of the Landfill. This Report discusses landfill operations; the revenues generated from said operations; the financial effects of the closure of the Landfill; post-closure obligations and requirements.

The Landfill operation generates approximately \$12 million in revenue from tipping fees each year, which funds various General Fund operations for the City such as public safety, infrastructure maintenance, parks and libraries. Closing the Landfill will considerably reduce revenue to the City's General Fund generated by its operation. The closure of the Landfill will also result in increases in the cost of operating the City's residential solid waste collection program due to the longer distances and higher tipping fees by utilizing disposal sites other than the Landfill. This will include adding two

additional drivers (and purchasing two new trash trucks) which combined with higher tipping fees and fuel costs will result in an operational increase of over \$1.4 million per year and an initial capital expenditure of \$640,000. However, this will also afford the opportunity to design and build a multi-faceted recreational park for the enjoyment of the Glendale residents.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests that the City Council provide staff with direction regarding the future of the Landfill.

BACKGROUND

The Landfill is owned by the City of Glendale and operated by the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Sanitation District) pursuant to the existing Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), which became effective October 7, 1997, between the City, Sanitation District and County of Los Angeles (County). The City owns approximately 345 acres of land; the County owns approximately 60 acres of land and Southern California Edison (Edison) owns the smallest parcel of land of the premises which collectively comprises the active side of the Landfill. The Sanitation District is not a land owner within the premises of the Landfill but operates the Landfill.

Based on the amount of solid waste being deposited currently, the Landfill is estimated to close sometime between July 2025 and June 2026; for discussion purposes the closure date in this report is stated as of December 31, 2025. It is important to note that this closure date is based on the amount of trash currently coming into the landfill so it is possible that a major recession may extend this date. Similarly, a reduction in the number of wasteshed cities (see discussion below) permitted to dispose in the Landfill could also extend this date. Conversely, a significant increase in daily tonnage will shorten the life of the landfill and it will close much sooner.

The opening of the Landfill in 1961 was a multi-jurisdictional effort that included the County of Los Angeles, City of Glendale, and the City of Los Angeles. All three public agencies worked together to obtain the necessary permits and build the needed infrastructure to create the Landfill. Since the opening of the Landfill in 1961, the estimated closure date has always been based on the amount of trash being deposited and has never been based on a pre-determined closure date. As the amount of trash deposited grew, the Glendale City Council began to evaluate creating a City ordinance to limit users of the landfill based on where the trash was

collected – this is known as a “Wasteshed Ordinance.” The amount of trash entering the Landfill reached a peak in June of 1987, which saw an average of 6,200 tons per day.

In October 1987, the Glendale City Council adopted Ordinance No. 4780, which enacted Glendale Municipal Code, Section 8.56.060, defining the wasteshed area and the entities/cities which comprise said area and who are allowed to dispose solid waste in the Landfill. The wasteshed is comprised of the Los Angeles County incorporated cities of Glendale, La Canada Flintridge, Pasadena, South Pasadena, San Marino and Sierra Madre; the Los Angeles County unincorporated communities known as Altadena, La Crescenta, Montrose; the unincorporated area bordered by the incorporated cities of San Gabriel, Rosemead, Temple City, Arcadia and Pasadena; and the unincorporated area immediately to the north of the city of San Marino bordered by the city of Pasadena on the west, north and east sides. On August 10, 1989, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 4855, whereby it amended GMC 8.56.060 to allow the City to restrict or limit the use of the Landfill in the event any of the wasteshed communities failed to undertake the necessary and mandated waste reduction activities as specified and approved by the City. This resulted in an immediate drop in daily tonnage (more than 50%) and significantly extended the life of the Landfill.

ANALYSIS

Today, the Landfill receives approximately 1,400 tons of trash per day. As stated previously, if the tonnage remains the same, the Landfill will reach its capacity around December 2025. At the current tonnage, the Landfill generates approximately \$12 million annually for the City’s General Fund.

If the Landfill was open only to the City of Glendale, it could stay open for about 4.5 years longer since the amount of trash deposited would sharply decrease. Of course, under this scenario, over \$8 million would be lost and the Landfill would only generate about \$3.5 million annually.

Since about 90% of the solid waste deposited at the Landfill comes from the Cities of Glendale and Pasadena, allowing Pasadena to continue to use the Landfill would only increase the life of the Landfill by about 6 months and the decrease in revenue would also be rather insignificant: under this scenario the Landfill would generate approximately \$10.5 million per year.

The final scenario evaluated by Public Works staff would exclude Pasadena but keep everyone else in (e.g., Cities of Sierra Madre, South Pasadena, San Marino, etc.). Under this scenario the revenue generated would drop down to approximately \$7 million per year and the life of the Landfill would be extended by about 2 years and 7 months.

The closure of the Landfill will result in increases in the cost of operating the City's residential solid waste collection program due to the longer distances and higher tipping fees resulting from the need to utilize disposal sites other than the Landfill. Staff has estimated the need to hire two additional drivers and purchase two new refuse trucks, which combined with higher tipping fees and fuel costs will result in an operational increase of over \$1.4 million per year and an initial capital expenditure of \$640,000 (to purchase the two new vehicles).

The cost of the operational increase in the amount of \$1.4 million is based on the assumption that the City's waste would be taken to either the City Terrace Recycling and Waste Transfer Station ("City Terrace"), located near Cal. State L.A.; or the Crown Recycling Services Transfer Station facility ("Crown Valley"), located in Sun Valley. This will also result in increased congestion and vehicle emissions on local freeways as not only Glendale, but also the other current users of the Scholl Canyon Landfill are diverted to more distant transfer and landfill locations.

As part of a comprehensive analysis, Staff has also evaluated various "what if" scenarios for extending the life of the Landfill, and determined the extent to which the cash flow revenue from the Landfill could also be extended. Since the Landfill will not be expanded, the only other option would be to modify the existing wasteshed ordinance to exclude various users of the Landfill which would in turn reduce the amount of trash deposited. The three scenarios evaluated resulted in a maximum addition of 4.5 years of life:

<u>Scenario</u>	<u>Added Life</u>	<u>New Estimated Closure Date</u>
1: Glendale only	4.5 years	June, 2030
2: Exclude Pasadena but allow all other users (Glendale, LCF, South Pasadena, San Marino, Sierra Madre and a few unincorporated communities listed in GMC 8.56.060	2.6 years	July, 2028
3: Glendale and Pasadena only	0.5 years	June, 2026

Therefore, if the City Council desires to extend the life of the Landfill, staff recommends excluding all outside entities from being able to use the Landfill so that the Landfill remains open as long as possible and continues to benefit the residents of Glendale by keeping their monthly solid waste rates as low as possible.

When the Landfill closes, the City's trash trucks will need to drive to other solid waste disposal facilities. One possibility is for the City to convert the existing Glendale

Recycling Center, located on Chevy Chase Drive, to a transfer station. Currently the Allan Company is operating the site as a clean Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) to recover the recyclable materials that are collected by city refuse trucks. The site is actually permitted to operate as a transfer station as well, so this is an option that the City could pursue.

Another possible option is to construct a transfer station at the Landfill after it closes. This facility could serve the existing watershed cities or, the City Council could add and/or exclude users by simply amending GMC Section 8.56.060. The transfer station would occupy only a small portion of the closed Landfill site and, as a result, not impede the City's plans to convert the majority of the site to recreational uses. Of course, either one of these options (transfer stations at the Recycling Center or the Landfill) would still necessitate transporting the refuse from the transfer station to a landfill. If the Council's direction is to explore either of these options, staff will perform a thorough evaluation so that Council can make an informed decision pertaining to which landfill is the best choice, considering the Council's priorities.

Assuming the City will not operate a transfer station after the Landfill closes, it will still need to take its refuse to an alternate location. Any alternate location chosen must be within a reasonable distance from the City to allow City collection trucks to take waste materials directly to the solid waste disposal facility, and then return to their routes to complete remaining collection efforts on any given day. City staff has determined that the farthest feasible distance to maintain this efficiency is within fifteen miles from the City. Two private transfer stations, namely City Terrace (located in Los Angeles) and Crown Valley (located in Sun Valley), are the most likely facilities that can be utilized by the City for its solid waste disposal needs; however, the eventual site will be selected following a competitive process. Staff has undertaken a preliminary analysis of the cost implications of taking the waste to both of these locations as part of this report.

Staff is in the process of preparing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to retain a consultant to study the optimal use of the City's Recycling Center; this study may recommend using this site as a MRF to process the City's solid waste when cost, efficiency, greenhouse gas emissions, and sustainability metrics are included in the analysis.

The Scholl Canyon Landfill has been serving the residents of Glendale and numerous surrounding communities since 1961. However, based on the current tonnage being deposited at the Landfill, it is expected to reach capacity around December 31, 2025. As a result, the City of Glendale needs to formulate a plan on how to process the City's solid waste after the landfill closes. Please note City staff

will be working on a more detailed analysis of the City's options as the closure of the landfill becomes more imminent; some of these options available to the City are:

1. Take the City's waste to City Terrace
2. Take the City's waste to Crown Valley
3. Take the City's waste to both City Terrace and Crown Valley
4. Utilize the City's existing Recycling Center to process the City's waste
5. Construct a Transfer Station/MRF at Scholl Canyon Landfill

In summary, due to the Landfill's expected closure, the City's Solid Waste Program will have to spend more money processing its solid waste and the environmental pollution associated with this program will increase as well. However, City staff believes that careful planning and analysis can help mitigate these increases to an acceptable level.

Wasteshed Options Available to the City:

The City can, by an ordinance adopted by the City Council, amend GMC Section 8.56.060 to remove some or all of the wasteshed communities. There is no statutory requirements and/or case law defining the noticing requirement (manner, timing, etc...) should the City wish to terminate the wasteshed, in part or in its entirety. In the event the City decides to remove some or all of the wasteshed communities, staff recommends providing notice of termination to the affected parties at least 180 days in advance in order to allow them the opportunity to make alternate arrangements.

Cal Recycle's closure checklist¹ sets forth the requirements for a closure/post closure plan and maintenance, but does not contain any information on wasteshed community noticing.

Landfill Closure and Post-Closure Obligations and Activities:

Once the Landfill reaches its capacity, there are several steps that the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County must take in order to lawfully close the site. First, they must prepare a final closure report and get approval by the Local Enforcement Agency (LEA) and CalRecycle. This report will include the final, engineered cover as well as the site drainage plan, gas collection system, and associated items that are required by the applicable regulations. Once the final cover is installed and the site is officially deemed "closed" by the regulators, the Sanitation Districts will surrender the land to the City of Glendale. There is currently a Joint Powers Agreement between the City, LA County and the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles that expires in

¹ <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/swfacilities/closure/plans>

October of 2027 and specifies the responsibilities for all three parties through the closing of the site.

California law, California Public Resources Code (CPRC) and the California Code of Regulations (CRC), requires dedicated funding for post-closure activities related to landfills based on the necessary estimated costs of maintaining items including, but not limited to, gas collection systems, ground water monitoring wells, air quality monitoring stations, and associated activities necessary to ensure the health and safety of the community once the landfill operations cease. Post closure costs will be estimated on a 30-year post-closure time frame. Some costs will be estimated based on the costs associated with similar, recent landfill closures that have occurred most recently for items such as the plastic liner and final cover put in place after the closure. Other actual costs, such as routine compliance (groundwater wells, air monitoring, gas collection system upkeep, etc.) incurred by the Sanitation District are used to estimate those post closure expenses.

For many years, the City has set aside budget appropriation for funding post closure activities and currently has \$52,760,826 set aside for post-closure obligations. If there is an unfunded liability at the time of closure, the balance of post closure costs can be secured through a pledge of revenue authorized under CRC guidelines. The CPRC and CRC allow a pledge of revenue, in lieu of actual cash, to fund a dedicated account (“Pledge of Revenue” or “Pledge”), meeting specific requirements set forth in the regulations. In order to establish funding through a Pledge, City Council will have to adopt a Resolution affirming its intent for the Pledge of Revenue, which is an authorization to enter into Pledge with Cal Recycle.²

Under CCR, Section 22245, the Pledge must identify:

- “(1) The types and sources of pledged revenue;
- (2) The amount of revenue pledged from each source;
- (3) The period of time that each source of revenue is pledged to be available;
- (4) The solid waste landfill(s) and the current postclosure and/or corrective action cost estimate(s) that are covered by the pledge; and
- (5) The authorization for CalRecycle to direct payment for postclosure maintenance and/or corrective action if CalRecycle determines that the operator has failed or is failing to perform postclosure maintenance or corrective action activities covered by the mechanism.”

The Council must make the Pledge prior to the Landfill reaching capacity. The Pledge must remain effective continuously throughout the period in which it is made to satisfy post-closure activities.

Use of the Landfill parcels post-closure:

The JPA requires the construction of parks/recreational facilities on the landfill premises

² Formerly California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB)

after the closure of the landfill. The provisions relating to the surrendered land by the County, Edison and the City's own land are consistent and uniform – that the land, post closure of landfill, will be used for park and recreation and roadway purposes – or other purposes related to the operation of the landfill on the premises. Additionally, the JPA requires the City to confirm the dedication for the public purposes of the City's 345 acres of land.

Once the Landfill is closed, the City Council can then consider proceeding with various recreational uses after garnering feedback from the community and interested stakeholders. Several ideas have been proposed (e.g., soccer fields, BMX tracks, hiking trails, etc.) but nothing has been finalized to date since community input will be a primary consideration in this decision-making process. It is important to note that even after the site is converted to recreational uses, the City will have to continue operating and maintaining all of the environmental pollution control and monitoring systems (e.g., gas collection system, boundary gas probes, gas wells, groundwater wells, groundwater extraction system, etc.) as discussed above. This work will be part of the ongoing "post-closure" activities at the closed Landfill that will continue in perpetuity.

STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH

Over the years, numerous public meetings and community outreach activities have accompanied any significant proposed changes to the Scholl Canyon site and/or Landfill operations. As the Landfill nears its date of closure, the City will conduct stakeholder outreach relating to the nature and type of future recreational uses of the land in order to make the appropriate recommendations to the City Council for consideration to ensure that the public is included in any decision-making process concerning the Landfill.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report. However, upon the Landfill's closure, the City's General Fund will stop receiving approximately \$12 million from the operation of the landfill. In addition, the cost of disposing trash from operating the City's solid waste operation will increase approximately \$1.4 million per year; thus the total impact to the City after closure will be approximately \$13.4 million annually. In addition, there will be a one-time capital expense of \$640,000 for the purchase of two new solid waste collection vehicles to the Refuse Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA/NEPA)

This item is considered a ministerial activity and therefore, not subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. The required CEQA review will be undertaken in the future as items related to the Landfill come up for consideration and City Council action.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

Not Applicable

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: Council may provide Staff with Direction Regarding the Future of the Scholl Canyon Landfill, considering the following options:

- Option a): Do not revise the City's Wasteshed Ordinance and allow the Landfill to close upon reaching capacity, currently estimated in December 2025.
- Option b): Revise the City's Wasteshed Ordinance to exclude all current users of the Landfill except for Glendale, which means the Landfill will continue operating until approximately June 2030.
- Option c): Revise the City's Wasteshed Ordinance to exclude the City of Pasadena and continue allowing all other current users of the Landfill, which means the Landfill will continue operating until approximately July 2028.
- Option d): Revise the City's Wasteshed Ordinance to exclude all current users of the Landfill except for Glendale and Pasadena, which means the Landfill will continue operating until approximately June 2026.

Alternative 2: Council may provide Staff with Alternate Direction Regarding the Future of the Scholl Canyon Landfill.

Alternative 3: Council may consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Prepared by:

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Approved by:

Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., City Manager

EXHIBITS/ATTACHMENTS

Not Applicable