

# Chapter 8

## Waste Transfer and Material Recovery System

### Introduction

Transfer stations serve as centralized collection points for solid wastes. They also provide for the collection of additional solid wastes, such as source-separated recyclable materials (not collected by curbside programs), yard debris, household hazardous waste (HHW), certain sludge, bulky waste, asbestos and other special wastes.

WAC 173-350, Minimum Functional Standards (MFS) for Solid Waste Handling, is the primary state regulation governing the design and operations of transfer stations in the State of Washington. Clark County Code Chapter 24.12, Solid Waste Management, is the primary local statute governing transfer stations.

Transfer stations increase the handling efficiency of solid waste management systems where disposal sites are long distances from waste sources. Combining significant amounts of waste at a transfer station can minimize haul times and costs for certificated / contracted haulers, self-haulers and municipal collectors.

- MSW storage facilities and equipment in Clark County, including residential and non-residential waste containers, waste collection vehicles, the three CRC transfer stations and the Tidewater barge loading facility, as well as temporary containers and certain facilities.
- MSW treatment and processing consisting primarily of material recovery activities at the CRC transfer station, in addition to special wastes, which are treated and processed in Clark County.

### Assessment of Conditions

#### Background

Leichner Landfill, which had previously received most of the municipal solid waste (MSW) in Clark County, was closed in December 1991. Anticipating the closure, the County and cities had planned and implemented a waste transfer and disposal system to provide long term handling of municipal solid waste (MSW). In 1988, after a long and unsuccessful landfill site selection process, the County and cities used a competitive selection process to find a provider for MSW recycling, transfer, transport and out-of-county disposal services. In April 1990, the County and the City of

Vancouver entered into a long-term contract with Columbia Resource Company (CRC), a wholly owned subsidiary of Waste Connections, Inc., with services which began in January 1992. The Contract with CRC was amended and extended for five years in January of 2006. The amended contract contains new terms and conditions including the installation of an upgraded recyclable processing line, and an opportunity to purchase the transfer facilities in 2026. The Contractual option to purchase the facilities must be exercised in 2021.

The basic contracted services provided by CRC are:

- Operation of three or more privately owned transfer stations in Clark County;
- Study the feasibility of a fourth transfer station north of Vancouver near the I-5 corridor;
- Install new MSW compactors at the two primary transfer stations;
- Diversion of a minimum of 10 % of the incoming waste stream;
- Operation of Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) drop-off facilities;
- Make improvements to the HHW drop off facility;
- Public drop-off facilities for source-separated recyclable materials;
- Transport and disposal of non-recycled and non-hazardous waste to the Finley Buttes Landfill in Morrow County, Oregon;
- Transportation by truck and disposal of non-hazardous waste from the Washougal Transfer Station to Wasco County Landfill in Wasco County, Oregon;
- Processing and marketing of recyclable materials from County/city curbside collection program;
- Install a new processing line at West Van Transfer Station for processing recyclable materials from County/City curbside collection programs;
- Improve and expand processing capacity for construction and demolition material;
- Establish a processing rate for construction and demolition material;
- Develop capacity for reloading foodwaste and establish a foodwaste processing rate
- An option for Clark County to purchase the transfer facilities for one dollar in 2026.

The contracted solid waste facilities are designated as essential county facilities and are an integral part of the County's regional solid waste management system.

CRC's contract contains a provision for a minimum annual recycling requirement (MARR) that requires CRC to divert for recycling or reuse 10% of the incoming waste stream. The MARR is reviewed annually for compliance, and to track what materials are being diverted. All MSW, including residential recyclables, generated in the County is directed to CRC transfer stations. The only exceptions from this requirement are: self-

hailed wastes and recyclables; wastes collected by Waste Control, Inc. in northwest Clark County; and commercially-generated and collected source separated recyclable materials. (Note: see Chapter 7 *Waste Collection* for definitions of source separated and recyclables, and a discussion of different types of loads. Also see Chapter 16 *Enforcement* for additional information on legal haulers.)

## **Flow Control**

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1994 in *Carbone* that flow control - state or local laws that direct where waste should be processed or disposed - violates the "dormant" Commerce Clause. Since that decision, several exceptions to this general principle have developed. MSW in Clark County is directed to the County contracted, privately owned facilities through contractual agreements between the haulers and municipalities and Interlocal agreements between the County and municipalities.

On April 30, 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *United Haulers Association Inc. v. Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Management Authority* that local governments are permitted to engage in flow control to government-owned disposal facilities in specific circumstances. The Court concluded that flow control laws that favor government-owned disposal facilities do not discriminate against interstate commerce, and are reviewed under a more lenient balancing test. The Court's decision narrows the impact of the Court's *Carbone* decision in 1994.

## **Central Transfer and Recycling Center (CTR)**

CTR is located at 11034 N.E. 117th Avenue (State Route 503). Operations began at this site in 1985 as the R&R Transfer Station.

CRC purchased this facility in 1990 to use as one of the two transfer stations it was required to provide by contract with the County. Under CRC ownership the site has been substantially upgraded and improved to handle increased traffic and waste flows and to accept HHW. During the second half of 1991, CRC reconstructed and expanded the old R&R site to include a new 40,000-square-foot transfer building with a hydraulic compactor unit. The old transfer building was expanded to 13,000 square feet and converted for use as a drop-off area for HHW and source-separated recyclable materials. New entry and scalehouse facilities were also added. The new transfer station building began operating in January 1992.

In addition to MSW, CTR accepts commercial waste including construction and demolition wastes, source-separated recyclable materials, HHW and other special wastes. Special wastes such as asbestos, petroleum-contaminated soils, ash, certain sludges and bulky wastes can be delivered to CTR with advance notice and completion of a special waste application issued by CRC.

CTR recovers both source-separated and non-source-separated recyclable materials. Source-separated materials are delivered to a public drop site separate from the main CTR tipping floor. Non-source-separated recyclable materials are recovered by CRC staff from selected loads on the tipping floor. Most tipping floor recovery occurs from drop-box and self-haul loads, not from compacted loads of mixed residential and

commercial wastes. These recovered materials include corrugated cardboard, wood, metals and other materials deemed economically recoverable. Recycled materials accumulated at CTR are either delivered directly to secondary markets or transferred to CRC's West Van facility for further processing.

MSW delivered to CTR is either top-loaded into transfer trailers or end-loaded by hydraulic compactor units into shipping containers. Solid wastes that are top-loaded are less compacted and could be transported to the West Van facility for processing to divert additional recyclable materials. Solid wastes that are compacted into shipping containers are transported directly to the barge-loading facility at Tidewater Barge Lines. They are then shipped upriver for final transport to the Port of Morrow and ultimately the Finley Buttes Landfill. Tidewater Barge Lines is the contracted transport company.

HHW is accepted from residential self-haulers in the receiving area of the recycling/HHW building. HHW is received, sorted and packaged prior to its removal from CTR by a licensed contractor and transported directly to an authorized treatment, storage and disposal facility. (Other hazardous materials accidentally or illegally disposed of with regular waste, are also removed from MSW by CRC personnel when seen on the tipping floor. Load check spotters, equipment operators and other station personnel have been trained to identify and isolate unauthorized wastes.)

CTR does have challenges regarding ingress, egress and on-site traffic management. The State Department of Transportation also plans in the next few years to place a traffic barrier on N.E. 117<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This will prevent a left turn into the facility (traveling north on 117<sup>th</sup> Avenue) and a left turn out of the facility. A traffic study for CTR should be included with the planned feasibility study.

### **West Van Materials Recovery Center (West Van)**

The West Van facility is located at 6601 NW Old Lower River Road, on the west side of Vancouver. Most of the waste delivered to this facility is generated in West and North Vancouver. This facility functions as a transfer station and materials recovery center and receives:

- Regular garbage (MSW) from private waste collection companies and self-haulers;
- Source-separated recyclable materials delivered by the public, including scrap metal, appliances, sheetrock and other materials;
- Household hazardous waste (HHW);
- "Dry" loads of commercial materials that have a high potential for recyclable materials recovery;
- Construction and demolition wastes (C&D)
- Yard debris, land clearing debris and other wastes, requiring special handling or processing;

- Source-separated recyclable materials collected through county/city curbside collection programs and delivered by the contracted operator.

The West Van Facility includes an 82,000-square-foot main building, entry and exit scales, control facilities, a container and drop-box storage area, administration and employee buildings, a six-acre C & D processing and composting area and a stormwater detention and treatment area. The facility also includes several operational components: a tipping floor/material recovery area; a recycling processing area; an HHW receiving and storage area; and a wood waste/yard debris storage and composting area. The tipping floor/material recovery area has separate bays for self-haulers and waste collection vehicles to unload MSW. Self-haulers unload on the east side of the facility, while certificated/contracted haulers unload on the northeast end of the facility. Loads with a high recycling potential are manually sorted to recover recyclable materials.

Residual wastes are pushed into a compactor for loading into shipping containers. The containers are then transferred to the Tidewater Barge Lines barge loading facility for shipment upriver for final transport to the Finley Buttes Landfill. Recyclable materials are trucked to end markets.

### **Washougal Transfer Station**

The 2000 Clark County Solid Waste Management Plan recommended that an east county transfer station be developed and included in the solid waste management system as an essential public facility. The County contract with CRC provided for the company to site, construct and operate a third transfer station east of I-205. A site in the Port of Camas and Washougal was selected through a feasibility study conducted by CRC. The contractor is proceeding with the construction of this facility. The operating permit has been approved through the Clark County Department of Public Health after a public hearing with SWAC. The siting of this facility, transport and disposal of waste has been determined to be in compliance with the state and local regulations and this plan.

Waste flowing through this facility will primarily come from the Cities of Camas and Washougal. The facility is to be open to the public for at least two days a week for commercial and residential self-haul loads. This facility may also receive some waste from Skamania County. The County contractor may enter into a contract with the City of Washougal, or another city, and may pay a host fee to the city. In addition to other waste transport options, waste may be transported via truck from the transfer station to the landfill in Wasco County, Oregon.

### **English Pit Transfer Station (Closed)**

The former English Pit Transfer Station was located at 912 N.E. 192nd Avenue in Eastern Clark County. The facility is owned by Clark County and was operated as a transfer station from 1978 to March 1989. The facility consisted of a 6,000-square-foot transfer building, a pay booth and administration building. The Roads and

Maintenance Division of the Clark County Department of Public Works is currently using the facility for equipment and material storage.

## **National Trend**

Recently in the northeast United States, a few transfer station projects have been proposed to be located on rail property. Project proponents contend that they qualify as rail operations as they are located on rail property. Therefore, they exist under the jurisdiction of the Federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) and are exempt by the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act (ICCTA) from state and local environmental laws and permits. Opponents of these projects maintain that the federal preemptions are reserved solely for facilities that are directly related to the functioning of rail transportation and not for solid waste facilities.

The STB held a hearing on a Wilmington, Massachusetts project and denied their application. The project proponents have indicated that they will re-file their application with the STB. In addition, Congress has expressed interest in enacting legislation that would prevent rail operators from using federal railroad preemptions to site waste transfer station facilities on their property without local and state reviews and regulation.

## **Waste Quantities**

Both CTR and West Van have been designed to receive and transfer up to 1,000 tons per day of solid waste under the current operations schedule. In 2005, a combined total 310,617 tons of waste was received at CTR and West Van. CTR received 187,504 tons of waste, 60% of the combined total. West Van received 123,113 tons of waste, 40% of the combined total. The completion of the Washougal Transfer Station will add an additional 50,000 tons per year of capacity under the proposed operations schedule. The facility will be fully operational in late 2007 or early 2008.

Future influences on MSW quantities in the transfer system include:

- The rate of increase and the distribution of population and commercial growth in the County;
- The ability of the County and cities to direct the flow of waste generated within their jurisdictions;
- Unauthorized export of MSW out of the County disposal system;
- Mandatory collection in cities and in all or portions of the County;
- The effectiveness of waste reduction and recycling programs;
- Improvements in technology and capacity of recycling processing equipment
- The strength of recovered material markets and prices;
- Changes in contractual and legal definitions of some components of the waste stream;

- Changes in waste composition resulting from changes in markets or recovered material prices; and
- Import of waste to the Clark County system.

## Recommendations

1. As needed, expand the system to include a north county transfer facility (near the City of Ridgefield or Battle Ground in the vicinity of I-5), in addition to the three existing transfer facilities. A feasibility study should be conducted and should include an evaluation for upgrading CTR to address traffic concerns.

The existing waste transfer system, consisting of the three transfer stations can be upgraded, as needed and as possible, to maintain or improve existing levels of service. The Contract with CRC provides the option to complete a feasibility study to determine if a fourth transfer station is needed. If a fourth transfer station is to be developed, the contract provides for CRC to site, construct and operate this station for the County. The County and CRC will evaluate the immediate and long-term need for additional solid waste transfer station(s) in the County, based on factors that would include:

- Growth patterns;
  - Traffic system development;
  - Projected population and employment growth;
  - Effect on overall solid waste system costs;
  - Availability of suitable sites;
  - Remaining capacity of existing stations;
  - Negative impacts of capacity usage of existing stations;
  - Levels of illegal dumping, illegal burning and inappropriate disposal;
  - Convenience and accessibility for County's citizens.
2. The County and cities should explore the option to purchase the CRC waste transfer system facilities prior to the contract option date of 2021.