

SC 5 - Managing Next Generation Household Waste



Project Lead:

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Description: Household hazardous waste (HHW) facilities provide homeowners a place to dispose of their household chemicals (such as paint, pesticides, and used motor oil) safely and at low cost. Like many other HHW facilities, the Scott County HHW facility in Jordan, MN also accepts “problem materials”—non-hazardous items that are difficult or expensive to dispose of, such as, tires, electronics, and appliances.

In 2017, Scott County’s Jordan HHW facility was expanded, but the facility has now reached its maximum size because it is surrounded by private property, a highway, and other county buildings. The 2017 expansion will allow the County to meet demand in the short-term, but acceptance of problem materials is a popular service. Data shows that the number of households using the service, the amount and diversity of materials received at the facility, and the cost to the County of disposing of these materials are all increasing, a situation that is not sustainable.

Scott County would like information and analysis that can inform planning for future household waste management.

Key Issues, Questions, and Ideas for Exploration:

- The types of problem materials being dropped off at the Jordan HHW facility have changed significantly in recent years. How can the County anticipate future waste streams so it can determine what additional non-hazardous items to accept at the facility and plan accordingly?
- Although use of the problem materials disposal service is increasing, the County suspects that some segments of the population do not know about the availability of the service or do not use it for other reasons. Who is currently using the service to dispose of household problem materials? What populations or geographic areas of the County are not using the service? How can the County better promote or market this service to those groups not currently using it?
- At some point, the demand will outstrip capacity at the existing Jordan HHW facility. Given what is known about current use of the facility and projected population growth in Scott County cities and townships, what would be the best location for construction of a new facility to serve residents? What factors should be used to make this determination?

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- How can the County improve processes and process flows at the facility with respect to the receipt, sorting, packing, and shipping of waste in order to reduce or eliminate wasted time, movement, customer delays, duplication of effort, errors, and lifting/handling of heavy items (like appliances, televisions, concrete mix, and five-gallon containers of paint)?

How Will Student Work Be Used to Build Resiliency?

Information about current use of the service, future waste trends, and possible sites for a new facility will all be used by Scott County to better prepare and plan for future demand to ensure that household hazardous waste and problem materials are safely disposed of.

In addition, because other counties in Minnesota are experiencing similar issues in terms of the volume of household hazardous and problem waste, changes in types of waste received, and staffing and infrastructure limits to capacity, both the information gathered and the research methodologies used will be of interest to other counties in the state.

Existing Plans and Reports:

- Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan, 2016–2036
- Scott County Solid Waste Master Management Plan, 2018–2036
- 2040 Scott County Comprehensive Plan

Potential Stakeholders and Partners:

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (letter of support)
- Dakota, Carver, and Le Sueur Counties (Reciprocal Use Agreement) (letters of support from Dakota and Carver)
- Scott County Residents

To learn more about this project or discuss how to integrate it into a UMN course or an individual student project (such as a culminating experience, capstone, master's project, or independent study), please contact Sarah Tschida or Mike Greco with the Resilient Communities Project at rcp@umn.edu.