

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

## **Proposed Sale of Hunterdon County Transfer Station**

**Does Hunterdon County have a dump?** No, Hunterdon County does not have a dump or landfill. The County has a Transfer Station/Material Recovery Facility located on Petticoat Lane in Clinton Township.

**What is a Transfer Station and Materials Recovery Facility?** The transfer station is a convergence point where solid waste is compacted into transfer trailers to be transported out to landfills, including landfills in Pennsylvania. Recycling is taken to Waste Management's recycling facility in Newark, NJ where it is separated, baled and marketed.

**Is the County selling the Transfer Station?** The County Commissioners are considering the sale of the Transfer Station. The sale would include the improvements to the property (buildings and scales) and the right to operate the facility. The sale would not include the land. Any new owner would need to negotiate a lease with the NJDOC directly.

**Is the Transfer Station closing?** No, the County is seeking to sell the Transfer Station to a private entity who will own and operate the facility, removing substantial infrastructure costs from the taxpayers.

**Will the County continue to have hazardous material cleanup, electronic clean up and shredding events if they don't own the Transfer Station?** Yes, these events are unrelated to the Transfer Station and will not be affected by any sale of the Transfer Station.

**Why is the County considering selling the Transfer Station?** As detailed in County and Sterner Reports, the facility is in need of extremely costly capital improvements to continue to comply with the NJDEP increasingly strict regulations. There is a concern that having all county taxpayers pay for these improvements when the site doesn't serve the entire county and also serves some Warren and Somerset County municipalities would create an unfair burden on the taxpayers of Hunterdon County.

**Does the County operate the Transfer Station?** No, the Transfer Station is operated by Waste Management under contract awarded by the County through the public bid process. A private company who operates 337 transfer stations and 97 material recovery facilities nationwide.

**Who uses the Transfer Station?**

- **Commercial solid waste haulers:** A majority of the users of the Transfer Station are private commercial trash haulers who bring in their trash after they pick it up from residential and commercial properties. Waste comes from some Hunterdon County municipalities and outside of the County (Warren and Somerset).
- **Commercial companies:** Contractors registered with the State are permitted to bring their commercial waste.
- **Public Entities:** The State of New Jersey brings its waste from its two Hunterdon County prisons, the County also uses the facility for some of its waste.
- **Clinton Township Residents:** Once a year, Clinton Township residents are permitted to obtain a permit from the Township and bring their bulk waste.

- **Residential Bulk Waste:** County residents are permitted to bring bulk waste (not household garbage) on Saturday mornings between 10:30am-12:45pm. Commercial entities are not permitted to use the facility during this time.
- **Residential Recycling:** County residents are permitted to bring their recycling materials to the Transfer Station, Weekdays from 7am-4:30pm and Saturdays from 7am-12:45pm.

**Does Hunterdon County own the Transfer Station?** The County owns the improvements to the property: a two-story building with a 3,400 square foot tipping floor and three floor level hoppers, 2 vehicle scales, a small building by the scales, a partially paved road and a concrete pad used for recycling tipping.

**Who owns the land where the Transfer Station is located?** The County leases six acres from the Department of Corrections (“NJDOC”) for use as the Transfer Station. The terms of the lease between the County and the NJDOC provide that the County can use the land in exchange for taking the NJDOC’s waste from the prisons at no cost.

**What does Waste Management own?** Waste Management owns the three stationary compactors that are used to crush the waste before it is loaded into the transfer trailers. The transfer trailers are leased by Waste Management from another company.

**What does Waste Management lease?** Waste Management contracts with the County for the right to operate the Transfer Station. They have a five-year contract with the County which expires on December 13, 2023 (if the six-month extension is not exercised). The Management contract is publicly bid by the County under the Local Public Contract Law.

**Does the County pay Waste Management to operate the Transfer Station?** No, Waste Management pays the County for the right to operate the Transfer Station.

**How much does Waste Management pay the County to operate the Transfer Station?** Waste Management pays the County an Operating Privilege Fee of \$20,000 annually. Waste Management also pays a premium of \$2.00/ton for each ton of solid waste it handles and \$2.00/ton for each ton of comingled recyclable materials accepted at the Transfer Station.

**What are the costs to the County to maintain the Transfer Station?** The County is required to maintain major infrastructure including the compaction building, the scales, the stormwater management system, and concrete recycling pad. The County is also required to pay all DEP permitting fees associated with the facility. The County recently replaced one of the two scales, the other will need to be replaced soon. Additional regulations from the NJDEP are adding substantial costs to the burden of maintaining the infrastructure.

**Does Clinton Township receive payment from the Transfer Station?** Yes, Clinton Township receives a Community Host Fee from Waste Management. The Community Host Fee is \$1.40 per ton.

**How much will the County make from selling the Transfer Station?** It is unknown at this time how much the County can sell the Transfer Station for. If sold, the property will be sold to the highest responsible bidder in accordance with the Local Lands and Buildings Law.

**Will Clinton Township still receive the Community Host Fee if the Transfer Station is sold to a private company?** Yes, any new owner of the Transfer Station will be required to continue to pay the Community Host Fee to Clinton Township.

**Currently, Clinton Township residents receive up to one permit from the municipality to allow each resident to take one bulk waste trip per year, free of charge. Will this continue if the Transfer Station is sold?** The County does not operate this service. As a service to its residents, Clinton Township issues one permit a year to allow residents to take their bulk waste for free. While this service is free to residents, the Township pays Waste Management directly for each permit. If the property is sold, Clinton Township will continue to be able to pay the operator directly to allow its residents to obtain an annual permit.

**Will County residents still be able to bring their bulk waste on Saturday mornings?** Currently, residents have a 2 hour and 15-minute window on Saturday mornings in which they can pay to bring in bulk waste, not household waste. This fee is paid by the resident directly to the operator. The County's bid documents to sell the transfer station will include a provision that this service be continued under new ownership.

**Will the new owner take household garbage from residents?** The Transfer Station does not currently allow residents to bring in their household trash and therefore it is unlikely a new owner will accept household trash from residents.

**Will County residents still be able to bring their recycling to the Transfer Station after it is sold?** The County's bid documents to sell the Transfer Station will include a provision that this service be continued under new ownership.

**Does all waste processed at the Transfer Station come from Hunterdon County?** No, the Transfer Station accepts commercial haulers waste which may or may not be collected from Hunterdon County. The Transfer Station currently accepts solid waste which originated from several Warren and Somerset County municipalities.

**What is the process to sell the Transfer Station?** The County is required to follow the Local Lands and Buildings law ("LLBL") if they wish to sell the Transfer Station. The LLBL requires the County to evaluate the sale, hold public hearings, publicly bid the sale and make any award at a public meeting.

**What has the County done so far?** As of July 5, 2023, the County has done the following:

- Engaged professionals: The County engaged the law firm of Archer & Greiner as Special Counsel to the County and Sterner Consulting who was tasked with evaluating valuation of the facility.
- Create a Report that weighs the Benefits and Determents of a Sale: Using the Sterner Report, the County staff and Special Counsel David Weinstein prepared a report which weighs the benefits and determents to selling the Transfer Station. A copy of those reports are available on the County's website.
- Public Hearings: Two public hearings were held by the County staff. The first was held June 6<sup>th</sup> during a County Commissioner meeting. The second was held on June 27<sup>th</sup> in Clinton Township. Notice was published in the newspaper, property owners within 200 feet of the property were sent individual notice (regular and certified mail) and the Clerk

in each of the 26 municipalities was sent notice. The audio and transcript of each meeting will be available on the County website.

**What are the next steps?**

- **Public Bid:** The County will seek bids from entities wishing to purchase the Transfer Station.
- **Commissioner Consideration:** The County Commissioners will review all of the public comments received along with the reports prepared by the County’s experts and the bids before they decide to sell the Transfer Station.
- If the Commissioners decide to sell the Transfer Station they can do so, after September 25, 2023. Any action to sell the Transfer Station will be done by Resolution at a public meeting.

**I missed the Public Hearing can I still submit a comment to the County?** Of course, the Commissioners will be considering comments until September 25<sup>th</sup>. Comments can be emailed to the Clerk of the Board at [commissioners@co.hunterdon.nj.us](mailto:commissioners@co.hunterdon.nj.us)

**Will the County be adding or reducing staff as a result of a sale of the Transfer Station?** No, the County has one staff person within the Health Department who is responsible for the Transfer Station. This employee is a Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) who has other responsibilities such as the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) and food establishment inspections.

**Has the County considered creating a public authority to own the Transfer Station?** Hunterdon County Utilities Authority (“HCUA”) was created in the 1970’s with the idea of creating a landfill. When a plan for a landfill was abandoned in the 1980’s, the HCUA was used to operate the Transfer Station. In 1985, the operation of the Transfer Station was contracted out to a private vendor to operate. The HCUA was dissolved in the mid 2000’s and the Hunterdon County Solid Waste and Recycling Division was formed to oversee the Transfer Station.

Public Authorities are authorized by law to enter into debt for which Hunterdon County taxpayers would be ultimately responsible, if the Authority was unable to meet its debt obligations.

**Where can I get more information about the Transfer Station?** The County’s website <https://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/> There is a link on the home page dedicated to information regarding the proposed sale of the Transfer Station.